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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE USE OF METAPHOR IN CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION.

IN

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

(SPRING) (1991)

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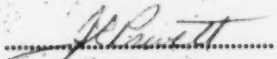

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled, "The Use of Metaphor in Christian Religious Education", submitted by John E. Privett in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education,
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DATE: Oct 24, 1990

This thesis is dedicated to Alida and Anne. Without their love, support and sacrifice it would not have seen the light of day.

ABSTRACT

Religious Education has traditionally committed one of two sins. It has either been so concerned with the development or the inculcation of a particular religious viewpoint that it would be more correctly understood as religious indoctrination, or it has focussed on a rational-critical approach to religious studies which seems more akin to a philosophy of religion program than religious education. What might religious education which attempts to understand religion as a way of life, and at the same time develops the understanding of the student involve? Recent literature on metaphor has shown it to be a multi-faceted phenomenon of language that is uniquely suited to contribute to a program of religious education. Metaphor functions as an important factor in perception and the ways in which concepts develop. It is an element in value formation and the expression of moral attitudes, a contributor to the development of intimate communities and plays a role in the formation of propositional statements. In this exploration of metaphor and its potential as an instrument of religious education, emphasis is placed on the Christian tradition, but it may well have a contribution to make across religious traditions as well. In addition to an examination of the various ways in which metaphor functions, there is discussion of the nature of religion and the type of education suited to religion. In a final proposal the use of metaphor in the classic tradition of Christian meditation is suggested as an important educational aid.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A preacher who was once asked how long it took to prepare his sermons replied, "Several hours and my whole lifetime". I hold a debt to many in the preparation of this thesis, but I would like particularly to thank Drs. Eamonn Callan and Foster Walker for their interest, their encouragement and challenging critique at different stages of work.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
- T.S. Eliot, "Four Quartets"

The philosophy of education holds up for us the question "What do we think we ought to be doing as we engage in that activity called education?". Any philosophy of religious education addresses the question "What do we think we ought to be doing when we engage in that activity called religious education?". It is clear by the great variety of approaches to religious education and issues raised by religion itself that there have been at best a number of differing responses to the question and at worst a great deal of obfuscation about the matter.[1] There are good reasons why a further attempt to reach some clarity in the area is warranted.

In recent years there has been a growing public desire for religious education.[2] There is, however, no concensus as to what is meant by "religious education". For some it is means instruction in a particular set of religious beliefs; for others it is the equivalent to moral instruction; and for still others it is the foundation for cultural understanding and tolerance. Some of the increased interest and call for religious education is reflected in the increasing number of "Christian" schools.[3] As educational policies are developed in future years there will be a continuing need for understanding and clarity about the nature and scope of religious education. At the same time that there appears to be a public flirtation with religious education of one kind or another, there exists a strong suspicion and nervousness about any kind of religion in the public school setting. With increased emphasis on multi-culturalism there is a reluctance to address any kind of religious education at all. Often understood as some form of indoctrination, religious education is expunged from the curriculum as having no place in a multi-religious society.[4]

Nevertheless, religion continues to be a significant and continuing phenomenon of human culture. Religious traditions have helped shape world history, contributed to the artistic and literary treasures of the world, inspired individual acts of courage as well as depravity, and influenced the development of the modern economic, social and political landscape. In an increasingly cosmopolitan world there is a smorgasbord of religious traditions present which are either subtly promoted or aggressively marketted. There is a need for an understanding of religion which will enable individuals to make intelligent responses to such an environment. Any "educated" individual must have

familiarity with the nature of religion so as to be able to have some resources with which to consider, critically and fruitfully, such a significant aspect of human experience.

There is a need within religious communities themselves for a clarification of the nature of religious education. Within the Christian churches there exists a variety of conceptions of religious education.[5] Thus Christian educators variously speak of religious instruction, catechesis, enculturation, and spiritual formation. The variety is not so much a concern as much as the potential for confusion which lies behind many of them.

Much denominational religious education is education in a particular confessional tradition, while exponents of religious education within a public school setting, in an effort to avoid confessional demands, tend toward some form of rational consideration of beliefs expressed in propositional forms. It is my contention that both approaches are inadequate. The former approach avoids or denies the very important questions which arise with a rational appraisal of religion. In an effort to develop an adherence to, for example, the Christian tradition (which is by no means monolithic), students are introduced to aspects of Christian belief as "truth" and "fact" without an opportunity to assess these claims rationally or to understand them as claims at all. The latter approach may reduce religious education to an objective consideration of credal formulations and thus be indistinguishable from a philosophy of religion class.

In what is an extreme example of the former, Alan Peshkin analysed one denominational school. It is important to note that not every school calling itself Christian is founded on the same doctrine or values as the one in Peshkin's study.

Bethany Baptist Academy is an example of the type of school associated with North American Fundamentalism and affiliated with the American Academy of Christian Schools (AACS). Peshkin frequently noted the close relationship between a strict belief system and the educational system it upheld.

> If a school is founded on absolute truth, it must follow that its doctrine is not subject to critical scrutiny. For its adherents, the only proper response to such doctrine is belief and obedience, and the best means of establishing this response is the total institution, as in Pastor Muller's twenty-four hour school.[6]

In his study entitled, God's Choice: The Total World of a Fundamentalist Christian School, Peshkin examined a school which provides a total immersion in the Christianity of a particular church. This is education in doctrine - indoctrination into a particular set of beliefs and values.[7] Peshkin noted,

> At Bethany [the Christian school studied] I felt I resided in a world totally unlike any other I had ever known. For example, integral to almost each days activities at BBA [Bethany Baptist Academy] was the invitation to everyone present to consider whether they were saved, right with the Lord, in the Word, etc. This regular calling of attention to one's relationship with the Lord was accompanied by daily, frequent prayers of gratitude to Jesus for blessings from him. For almost everyone at Bethany, with the exception of me and my two research assistants, no events were as significant as Jesus' death and resurrection, and no relationship with a living person as significant as their relationship with him. The virtual uniformity of Bethany's social environment showed us in sharp relief.[8]

and later,

> ...each chapter of this book will unavoidably relate to the dictates of doctrine, since this is what Christian schooling is all about.[9]

The implications of such an approach are many and the "dictates of doctrine" determine all aspects of such education. They shape the role of the teacher, the attitude toward

discipline and the educational values of the institution. The teacher's authority is final in both discipline and subject areas and even extends to moral supervision both within and beyond the school walls. Pedagogical variety existed, but only within the narrow confines of church doctrine.

> BBA rejects the notion that students benefit by dealing with alternative perspectives of ideology, interpretation and policy. Choice, doubt, suspended judgement, evidence - these are excluded from its pedagogical arsenal.[10]

The results of such an approach vary with each student, but a commitment to developing the adoption of particular, defined beliefs by students produces an educational system with values distinct from and often in direct opposition to widely held educational values. Quoting the school's headmaster, Peshkin wrote,

> As tender shoots, easily bent toward the world's ways, their school must be no place for sceptics, no market for the sifting and winnowing of ideas, no garden in which a thousand flowers may bloom. BBA excludes this sort of education which, because it is "...of man, by man for man - based on the autonomy of man's reason ... honors and serves the dominion of Satan."[11]

In an attempt to avoid such an intellectual desert and individual straitjacket, other educators concerned with encouraging a program of religious education propose a program which amounts to a disinterested discussion of religious ideas. Paul Hirst recommends an approach which stresses intellectual autonomy, but may be more similar to a philosophy of religion course than a program of religious education.[12] Hirst develops his view of religious education in accord with his understanding of the nature of knowledge. There are distinct "forms of knowledge", he claims, each with its own central concepts, methods for assessing truth claims, and its own logical structure. Since

there are so many competing truth claims in religion and no generally agreed upon method for assessing the different claims and thus resolving the disputes, Hirst suggests that although it is unclear that religion is a form of knowledge, it is certainly a domain of beliefs. Rather than be taught as some kind of "truth" religion should be taught as an introduction to different belief systems.

> I suggest, therefore, that the most satisfactory position for the maintained school is for the religious education it gives to be confined to instruction about beliefs.[13]

Hirst maintains that any education worthy of the name is based on sound principles of objectivity and rational appraisal and that religious education must necessarily involve the appraisal of various religious beliefs.

> If then education is seen as determined in its limits by the development of reason and objectivity, any attempt to bring about deep understanding of one or more religious faiths and their significance can be fully compatible with that only if those religious claims are presented as, on purely publicly accepted rational grounds, radically controversial.[14]

This approach involves introducing students to a wide variety of religious claims, while maintaining the tentative nature of those beliefs and assisting students to examine such claims as critically as possible. Such an approach begins to be indistinguishable from a philosophy of religion course and raises the question of what then is religious education? Hirst does acknowledge that there is a role for the affirming of experiences within religious traditions, but calls this "catechesis" as distinct from religious education. In his view, the former is appropriate within particular faith traditions, while the latter is suited to public schools.[15]

Hirst's position seems to shift somewhat in a recent contribution to a symposium

on religious education.[16] While maintaining the supremacy of a rational critical approach to values and belief, he has suggested that there is room for experience and commitment.

> ... in seeking to be determined by the bounds of reason and reason alone, [this approach] must not be thought to be aiming at pupils achieving a general state of critical scepticism or doubt in any area. What it aims at throughout is commitment in belief and practise in every area - commitment by the individual to the most rationally justifiable beliefs and values as he can judge in his particular circumstances.[17]

Despite this move toward the inclusion of commitment and experience in religious education, Hirst is silent on the matter of how in practice such a position is developed. It is my view that an understanding of metaphor will contribute to the development of a religious educational approach which honours experience, commitment and rational appraisal.

The question "What do we think we ought to be doing in religious education?" presupposes other related questions: "What is religion? What is good religion? What is a good religious person? What constitutes education for such a person?".

It quickly becomes apparent that although these questions give the context for what is pursued here, and will require enough consideration to indicate what assumptions are brought to this discussion, this is not an amateur's version of Fraser's Golden Bough, Whitehead's Religion in the Making, or Cantwell Smith's The Meaning and End of Religion. Within the broad range of religion itself and the many theories about religion, as well as the great number of theories of education it is essential to move quickly to an examination of what makes up the heart of this discussion:

metaphor and its potential as a vehicle for religious education.

This discussion, then, proceeds firstly with a consideration of the nature of religion and the religious person. I have entitled this study "The Use of Metaphor in Christian Religious Education", for although much of what is discussed may have application across many traditions I take as my focus and source of examples the Christian religious tradition. To use the words "Christian" and "religious" together may seem redundant, but I use them in this way to indicate that Christianity is one tradition in the midst of many, and although it is a particular tradition, there are aspects which are clearly shared with other religious traditions (specifically Judaism). Thus my conclusions will be for Christian religious education specifically. This initial examination will lead to some working definitions for our study which will lay the groundwork for all that will follow. Secondly, the discussion will continue with a consideration of the nature of education. Thirdly, both the above imply some theory of knowledge which will be examined in a focussed discussion of the nature of metaphor, its relationship to religious language, and its potential to function as a foundation for religious education. Finally, the ways in which an understanding of metaphor might be applied to Christian religious education practice will be considered.

ENDNOTES

1. See for example: Jack Seymour and Donald Miller (ed.), Contemporary Approaches to Religious Education, Abingdon Press, Nashvile. 1979, M.C. Felderhof (ed.), Religious Education in a Pluralistic Society, Hodder and Stoughton, London. 1985, Paul Hirst, "Education, Catechesis and the Church School", in British Journal of Religious Education Vol. 3: No. 3 (Spring 1981)

2. See also W.D. Hudson, "Two Questions about Religious Education", in Roger Straughan and John Wilson (ed.), Philosophers on Education, MacMillan Press Ltd., Basingstoke. 1987 pp. 118 - 120.

3. Alan Peshkin, God's Choice: The Total World of a Fundamentalist Christian School, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 1986

4. For example, recent remarks in two separate papers to the Royal Commission on Education in British Columbia reflect this nervousness:

> The importance of the role of the school in moral development and education is evident from the number of briefs which make mention of it. This is clearly an area where the people believe the school has an important function. In many briefs Moral Education is discussed in a specific religious context. While this is one way in which a programme of moral education might be implemented, it is neither the only, nor the most appropriate choice in a pluralistic society such as ours.

See: David Robitaille, et. al., Curriculum in the Schools of British Columbia, Commissioned Papers, Vol. 3, British Columbia Royal Commission on Education (1987 - 1989) p. 55

> On the question of religion there was disagreement. Some from the non-public sector declared it the true context of all educational endeavour. Others deplored general lack of observance of Bible reading and prayers as legally required in B.C. public schools. Yet others concluded that this same legislation could be attacked as infringing the Human Rights Act of the province and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms of the Constitution of Canada.

See: John Calam, British Columbia Schools and Society, Commissioned Papers, Vol. 1, British Columbia Royal Commission on Education (1987 - 1989) pp. 39 - 40

5. See for example: Jack Seymour and Donald Miller, Op. Cit.

6. Peshkin, Op. Cit., p. 14

7. I use the word "indoctrination" advisedly, recognizing that there is a great deal of discussion about its precise definition and useage. Nevertheless, at its basic meaning of passing on doctrine - the Bethany Baptist approach is unabashedly so.

8. Peshkin, Op. Cit., p. 17

9. Ibid., p. 32

10. Ibid., p. 141

11. Ibid., p. 113

12. See Paul Hirst, "Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge", in Dearden, Hirst and Peters (ed), Education and Reason, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London. 1972; Paul Hirst, Knowledge and the Curriculum, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London. 1974; Paul Hirst, "Education, Catachesis and the Church School", in British Journal of Religious Education Vol. 3: No. 3 (Spring 1981); and Paul Hirst, "Education and Diversity of Belief", in M.C. Felderhof (ed), Religious Education in a Pluralistic Society, Hodder and Stoughton, London. 1985

13. Paul Hirst, "Morals, Religion, and the Maintained School", in Knowledge and the Curriculum, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London. 1974 pp. 183 - 184

14. Paul Hirst, "Education, Catechesis, and the Church School", Op. Cit., p. 88

15. Ibid.

16. Paul Hirst, "Education and Diversity of Belief", Op. Cit.

17. Ibid., p. 13

CHAPTER TWO

A STUDY OF RELIGION AND EDUCATION

I

> I stress these difficulties because, as I have said, I feel it is important that one enter on this study with a due sense of trepidation. It is well that one should realize what one is attempting. Where only angels tread, he would be a fool to rush in; though perhaps the wise may preserve their dignity if, aware of their presumption, they enter cautiously.
>
> - Wilfred Cantwell Smith[1]

To investigate religious education is also to investigate religion itself and this is where much of the difficulty begins. Many of the varied responses to the question "What is religious education?" are based on different answers to the question "What is religion?". The problem is not a new one. In his book The Meaning and End of Religion, W.C. Smith describes the evolution of the word "religion" (latin: religio) and points out that from its earliest use a certain amount of ambiguity has always existed although certain emphases can be identified. It is clear that "religion" has been used

to refer to a wide range of phenomena including: rites and cultic practices pertaining to particular gods and holy places; the attitude of the individual toward the Other, the Divine; the object of devotion itself; and the various systems of thought, practice, and devotion associated with any of the so-called "world religions".[2] The ambiguity in the word itself as well as the great variety of phenomena associated with religion have perhaps made any kind of comprehensive definition extremely difficult and may have contributed to the tendency for writers on religion to emphasize one or another aspect of religion to the neglect of others. Thus much twentieth century philosophy of religion has been occupied (or perhaps preoccupied) with the meaning and the truth of the assertion "God exists", the result being an almost exclusive attention to philosophical theology or the rational aspects of belief with little concern for their context.[3] This is not to say that philosophical theology is unimportant, only that it is not all there is to the phenomenon of religion.

The variety of religious phenomena make it unlikely that one will be able to identify a list of necessary and sufficient conditions which would provide an adequate definition of religion. Regarding necessary conditions it would seem reasonable in such a list to include belief in a deity, a moral dimension, an aspect of personal piety, and some ritual activity. In each case, however, it is possible to find instances of religion which preclude it.[4] So too, the plurality of religious phenomena, with some aspects occurring in one instance of what we want to call religion, but not in another, would seem to doom a search for sufficient conditions.

In the face of such difficulties of definition attempts have been made instead to

capture the essence of religion. Instances of this approach are Friedrich Schleiermacher's,

> It is true that religion is essentially contemplative. You would never call anyone pious who went about in impervious stupidity, whose sense is not open for the life of the world ... The contemplation of the pious is the immediate consciousness of the universal existence of all finite things, in and through the Infinite, and of all temporal things in and through the Eternal. Where this is found religion is satisfied, where it hides itself there is for her unrest, and anguish, extremity and death.[5]

and Alfred North Whitehead's,

> Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness. It runs through three stages, if it evolves to its final satisfaction. It is the transition from God the void to God the enemy, and from God the enemy to God the companion. Thus religion is solitariness; and if you are never solitary, you are never religious.[6]

This approach either is based on speculation about the origins of religion about which we know little, or on an organizing principle which all religious phenomena are claimed to relate to. The problem with these is lack of available information regarding the former and a lack of clarity about the criteria for deciding between competing "essential" principles.[7]

Difficulties with the above approaches, however, do not mean that they are without value. It is possible to identify what might be called "features of religion" listing phenomena whose presence help to make something a religion. This does not leave us with a definitive answer to the question "What is a religion?", but points us toward aspects of human experience which can be included under the somewhat ambiguous word "religion".[8]

The features of religion are many and varied for religion is what Philip Phenix calls synoptic. That is, it integrates a variety of ways in which human beings organize and order the world.[9] Among these features of religion I would include:

1. Formulated statements of belief or doctrine within particular philosophical frameworks which address the nature of the relationship between the human and the sacred. I have chosen to use the word "sacred" for what is variously described as the divine, the holy, the transcendent, the Ultimate, God, which allowing for the variety of religious phenomena may be understood to refer to all of these. The Nicene Creed of the Christian Church is an excellent example of such a statement.

2. A moral code or implied ethical viewpoint based on a conception of the sacred. The Decalogue which ecapsulates the covenant relationship between Yahweh and the Hebrew people is clearly an instance of this aspect of religion.

3. Aesthetical phenomena such as ritual, drama, art, music, literature, and symbols which relate to the divine. Examples of these are multitude and include the Bible itself, sacred liturgies of many traditions, and the long history of iconography, architecture and hymnody.

4. Activities or experiences which may be described as prayer, worship or devotion to the sacred.

5. Feelings such as awe, wonder, reverence, fear, guilt, adoration, and peace associated with any of the above.

II

> ... religio is certainly not 'one of the religions' an overt, institutional phenomenon nor an abstract system... It is an inner personal attitude... something personal, inner, and transcendentally oriented. Probably the nearest equivalent concept in modern English is that of piety.[10]

Granted that what has been suggested in Section I above can reasonably be said to be features of religion, we must now move to a consideration of what characterizes the religious person. As we begin to do so it is clear that the ambiguity that is involved in any discussion of religion will also be involved in a discussion of the religious person. It will be valuable, nevertheless, to consider religion as it is made concrete in the lives of people.

It is tautological to assert that the relgious person will exhibit at least some and perhaps many of the features of religion. Thus it almost does not need to be said that a religious person is one who may reveal one or many of the above mentioned features. A religious person may affirm a formulated statement of belief about him or herself in relation to the sacred, but not necessarily. A religious person may adhere to some moral code which is founded upon sacred principles, but again this is not necessarily so. A religious person may participate in activities recognizable as prayer, or worship, or be engaged by any number of religiously aesthetic phenomena but not to include these does not immediately preclude a person from being religious. Finally, a religious person may attest to feelings which can be described as feelings of awe, wonder, fear, guilt, or peace, but these are so general that many having these feelings would not claim to be

religious. So can anything be said to bring some definition to what is meant when we speak of a religious person?

In developing a list of features of religion and thus features which may be exhibited by religious persons, we have suggested a list which progresses along a continuum from primarily impersonal phenomena to increasingly personal phenomena although I am not implying that these are mutually exclusive categories. Statements of belief, moral codes, and objects of art are chiefly impersonal phenomena. This is precisely why they are developed. Doctrinal statements, and codes of ethics are developed so that there might be a shared, public statement of religious life which can be examined, considered and analysed. There is an aspect of aesthetics which is also impersonal and public. These features of religion exist to enable individuals to distance themselves from a purely personal perspective and to consider rationally a continuing aspect of human life. As we proceed along the continuum through aesthetics, prayer, and religious emotions, the phenomena become extremely personal. Thus when a person engages in worship, although aspects of belief and assertions about the world are implied, these are nevertheless, not as prominent as perhaps feelings of wonder, awe, reverence or contrition. This may be what lies behind Alfred North Whitehead's remark that, "You use arithmetic, but you are religious."[11]

In attempting to come to terms with what "religious" means, Peter Winch focussed upon the these personal features of religion as distinctive.

> I am thinking of concepts like worship, reverence, religious awe, devoutness. These are concepts which we apply to human beings in certain aspects of their lives, demeanor, and practice, and which we think of as characteristic of descriptions of the religious

> dimensions (or lack of such dimensions) of people's lives. It is a noteworthy fact that, being able to make something of the distinction between a man who is a devout Christian and one who is not, I do not feel at a loss when I hear such a distinction drawn within the context of Buddhism, even though I have very little understanding of Buddhist doctrine.[12]

Winch's point is that although statements of belief in the form of doctrine are important, they are not primary to religious experience. It is religious persons who make such statements and statements of belief arise out of personal experience. I am aware in these statements that there is a question begging about the evolution of religious thought and experience and am not suggesting by using the words "primary" and "arise out of" that it is clearly the case that religious propositions are a logical development of religious feeling. Both Whitehead and Wittgenstein recognize that propositions and experience are closely related.[13]

The religious person then, is not unlike Iris Murdoch's "virtuous peasant", the simple person who is virtuous but unable to articulate moral reasoning.[14] Murdoch's example can help us distinguish between the morally admirable individual and the morally educated. In a similar fashion we can distinguish between the religiously admirable person who is clearly devout, but may not be able to articulate their religious views, and the religiously educated person who is also devout but able as well to explain their reasoning for their particular beliefs and practises.

It is important at this point in our discussion to distinguish further between three commonly confused terms: knowledge, belief and faith. There is a well developed and continuing debate over the definitions of "knowledge", and its companion "belief", and

"faith" is often confused with these as well as with "religion". It is not our primary concern in this present context to enter deeply into this debate. What is valuable for our discussion of religion and the religious person is to draw broad distinctions which can help clarify what is referred to by these terms.

Knowledge can be broadly defined as "justified, true, belief" with perhaps additional consideration given to relevancy and certainty.[15] For someone to make the assertion, "I know the sky is blue" is for them to assert 1.) that they have a means of justifying their statement, that is that they can provide good, relevant reasons for making the assertion, 2.) that the assertion is indeed true, and 3.) that the one making the claim believes the claim to be true. It is possible to imagine a person inside a windowless room, not unlike many classrooms in a modern university, claiming to know that the sky is blue at this moment. She may say: "I've just come into the building. When I came into the building only 3 minutes ago the sun was shining, the sky was blue and there was not a cloud in the sky. If you go outside you can see the sky is blue. I cannot conceive of the possibility that the weather has changed significantly in such a short time." If we did look out and could verify her claim that the sky was blue, then it could be said that this assertive student in the windowless room did know that the sky was blue. This view of knowledge arises with respect to propositional knowledge or "knowing that" something is the case. There is also knowledge which can be called "knowing how" which may not involve justification or belief in the same way. For instance, one knows that a body is bouyant in water, but one knows how to swim. These may be distinguished as "theoretical knowledge" and "practical knowledge".[16] A

further consideration may be made of knowledge which is a "knowing of" such as the knowledge of a person or thing. This has been referred to a "knowledge by aquaintance" and differentiated in the French by the words *connaitre* and *savoir*.[17]

We can distinguish between knowledge and belief by considering a situation similar to the one above in which a student lost inside a windowless series of classrooms for several days claimed, "The sky is blue today". When queried about her assertion, she might respond, "Well, this time of year it usually is blue. The room is quiet and warm so it must be pleasant outside. It is noon and the weather forecast was for a whole week of sunshine. All things indicate that the sky is probably blue". Yet, when we checked outside we discovered that it was overcast and grey and humid with no blue sky to be seen. Although the student provided good reasons which were relevant, and although she was committed to the truth of her assertion, an attempt to verify her claim proved her to be mistaken. Her commitment to her assertion constitutes her belief, but it was not a true belief and thus she should not claim "to know the sky was blue" but more accurately should have claimed, "I believe the sky to be blue".

Faith needs to be distinguished from both "knowledge" and "belief" as well as from "religion". Faith rather than referring to intellectual assent to propositional statements has been described as an attitude or a disposition. The Jewish philosopher Abraham Heschel describes faith as, "... sensitivity, understanding, engagement, and attachment; not something achieved once for all, but an attitude one may gain and lose".[18] John Hick describes faith as the interpretive activity of the individual toward the whole of life's experience,

> For Christian theism is the conviction that all life is under the control of a single, sovereign, personal will and purpose whose scope includes and yet transcends this present world and whose fulfillment secures man's deepest happiness and well-being. This at least is its propositional formulation. But the faith of which we have been speaking does not consist in the intellectual acceptance of such propositions but in the concrete interpretation of life and all that it brings in these terms, seeing its requirements, disciplines, mercies, rebukes and joys as mediating the divine presence.[19]

This position is expanded by James Fowler who developed a stage theory of faith development in the 1970's and has suggested that faith is a complex, multilayered phenomenon which includes a -

> ... dynamic disposition of the total self giving character to a person's way of moving in life ... [a relationship to] a comprehensive image (or images) of the conditions of existence taken as a whole ... [a central disposition which] shapes its initiatives and responses in our lives on the bases of ... imagination, valuing, or affections and reasoning in a complex "logic of conviction".[20]

Faith as distinguished from belief and knowledge is better understood as a way of life by which individuals live in the world. It does not rest on satisfactory proofs or claims. Robert Coburn describes this as a "Faith-state" and characterizes it by certain attitudes such as a sense of the numinous, a sense of peace, love, joy, an attitude of disdain toward "worldly success", a sense of gratitude and participation in various religious activities.[21] To one in the "Faith-state" the issues raised by philosophical theology may be relatively unimportant.

To be religious then, is to be involved not only in some of the features of religion suggested in section 1, but also to exhibit religious faith. The impersonal and

the personal features of religion are incorporated in a religious person, they are all part of a way of life.

III

> ... the understanding of religion requires very sympathetic study; perhaps it requires even more - religion itself.
> - Louis Arnaud Reid[22]

It is difficult to identify without controversy what it is we do when we engage in education. Like religion, there is an ancient tradition of education, but not a great deal of clarity as to what we think we are doing in education. R.S. Peters writing in 1966 remarked that in his own research he was unable to discover much about the "logical geography" of the concept of education.[23] Although since then a great many attempts have been made in the task of bringing clarity to the question "What is it we ought to be doing when we engage in that activity called education?" by no means has a concensus been developed. Discussions of education are not without context, however, and in the case of religion what we have to consider is the education appropriate for the person we would understand to be religiously educated.

The discussion of the kind of education appropriate for a religious person is focussed by what has been said previously. This means that this discussion of education begins with a significant assumption.

The approach taken here, that of examining religion, and the religious person and then asking what kind of education is appropriate for the education of such a

person assumes that education is contextual. By that, I mean that education may have certain general features but specifically is to be understood within a particular context, discipline or field. Paul Hirst makes the point that in terms of "critical thinking" there are a variety of specifics implied according to the form of knowledge. Thus, what it is to think critically in mathematics is different from what it is to think critically in history.[24] Although there are recognized problems with Hirst's "forms of knowledge" thesis, the point that differing contexts alter certain concepts is a significant one. So too, with the concept of education. Education in arithmetic may share certain general features with education in history but the two activities may in significant ways be quite distinct.

Let me undertake this part of our discussion by considering what can be said generally about education:

1. Education involves "deliberately directed learning". Contrary to the popular view that "all experience is educational", education involves deliberate, intentional learning. I am using the word "learning" to apply to that "... comprehensive activity in which we come to know ourselves and the world around us."[25] Such a view of learning is personal for it takes seriously the view that what is coming to be known is ourselves and the world in relation to ourselves. Lawrence Cremin's definition of education as "... the deliberate systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or aquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, or sensibilities ..." recognizes that ourselves and our world include not only strict categories of knowledge, but also other aspects such as skills, values and attitudes.[26] Alfred North Whitehead also stresses this comprehensive

approach to education. "Education is the guidance of the individual towards a comprehension of the art of life; and by the art of life I mean the most complete achievement of varied activity expressing the potentialities of that living creature in the face of its actual environment."[27] Learning implies that a learning subject S comes to know something K. As in the discussion of knowledge above, this includes theoretical knowledge as well as practical knowledge, and knowledge by acquaintance. A concept of education which not only includes a strict definition of knowledge but also includes other "learned" abilities, and attitudes is implied here. This type of learning is in opposition to what Paulo Freire calls the "banking concept of education" in which teachers select data from the great vaults of human tradition and in which students are passive receivers of such information.[28] Education then involves not only learning which by its very nature is personal, but deliberately directed learning. That is, education is not an accidental activity. There is an element of intentionality about it. There is no question that unplanned and non-deliberate learning takes place in many different ways. The extensive literature on the "hidden curriculum" emphasizes this. Education, as I conceive of it, as distinguished from any learning whatsoever involves planned learning. This is not to suggest that learning is necessarily teacher oriented, for learning can be deliberately planned by individuals for themselves, by teachers for students, or by groups of individuals for one another. This is not to imply either, any particular setting or method for learning given that learning is not merely passive reception.

2. Education involves initiation into an activity which is the context for learning.

Education does not happen in the abstract but in specific human activities. Again as suggested above, this involves not only a "knowing that", but also a "knowing how". One does not learn arithmetic without doing arithmetic; one does not learn history without doing history; one does not learn religion without doing religion. With this latter formulation we are aware of an important shift in emphasis. We know what it is to do arithmetic, but what is it to do religion? As noted already, it was Whitehead who remarked that "We use arithmetic, but we are religious". This takes us into a critical area of controversy, for it is common to initiate individuals into arithmetic and encourage them to do arithmetic; it is far more controversial to initiate individuals into religious activity and encourage them to "do religion" (which may mean that they become religious). It is noteworthy, however, that we are less concerned about introducing individuals into the activities associated with art, drama, literature, and music and even rejoice when they become artistic, musical or literary. Could it be that religion has come to be understood as demanding intellectual assent to sets of doctrinal formulations or credal statements which are of debatable truth value and not understood as an attitude of openness to the sacred? The fear of involving individuals in religious activity is that they lose their individual autonomy and that rather than encouraging individual exploration and consideration, conformity to a particular dogma or set of beliefs has been mistaken for religious education. The third aspect of education addresses this concern.

3. Education also involves the promotion of rational appraisal of the activity into which one is initiated. This is implied in the discussion of "knowing that" above.

Such rational activity is of paramount importance for it is in the process of intelligent reflection and consideration that personal experience is made public. This process of objectifying is necessary for the weighing of evidence, the comparing of evidence and the synthesis of diverse experiences in the development and formulation of human knowledge. As Paul Hirst strongly argues, it is important that all areas of belief, values and attitudes be areas in which rational critical appraisal be encouraged.[29] He recognizes that in many areas beliefs and values may not be assessable as true or false, but nevertheless can be considered as more or less defensible and that not only will beliefs be contestable, but that in some areas such as morality and religion, there will be disagreement as to what rational critical appraisal will mean. The important point to be made here, is that a rational appraisal is of utmost importance in any educational activity. For it is in developing the rational abilities that one develops the capacity for critical reflection upon the activity one is engaged in. It is the rational faculties which enable the individual to assess truth and falsity, good and bad, coherence and incoherence and to exercise personal autonomy.

A central question which emerges is what is the object of this critical appraisal? As already argued, it is not enough to weigh the various credal claims of a religion. Such claims are public statements which result from religious activities and it needs to be asked whether such statements are adequate representations of religion. To appraise rationally the statements alone is to engage in the philosophy of religion, but it is not to appraise religion as a whole. Likewise to consider rationally religious rites, or art or symbols independently of the whole is to engage in the philosophy of aesthetics. What

is required is rational appraisal of the whole breadth of religion including the attitudes, and inclinations shaped by a personal engagement in religious activity. In Christian religious education, religious metaphors can be chosen for consideration and appraisal. It is precisely this rational appraisal that creates the distinction between religious education and the practise of religion.

Paulo Freire suggests an educational pattern for socio-political education with his Praxis model of education.[30] This pattern of action - reflection - action (which he calls *conscientizacao*) is what is being suggested here, except that the action implied is not participation in a society, but participation in a religion. Participation alone would be tantamount to socialization, enculturation, or indoctrination. The reflection is a key element in ensuring that the process is educational. Personal uncritical engagement alone approaches indoctrination; public, objective appraisal alone is disconnected theoretical speculation.

4. Education involves the development of understanding. In many ways this is not to add to what has been said except to say that understanding involves personal aquaintance with the subject, as well as rational appraisal. Both are needed for understanding to occur. By understanding I mean an awareness of general principles which develop from a shared rational appraisal of an activity and not only an awareness of the principles but an ability to apply those principles correctly in a variety of circumstances.[31] Understanding would seem to indicate not only a capacity for rational appraisal, but also an intimate, personal familiarity with what is being appraised.

Education then is not abstract. It takes place in a particular context so that the components which make up the educational activity may vary from situation to situation. Education also involves deliberate, directed learning, an initiation into an activity which includes cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects and provides the material for rational appraisal and understanding. Religious education may include appraisal of various doctrinal formulations or statements of belief. It may include the appraisal of moral codes and the historical development of religions and it may include a variety of opportunities to consider religious art, music, drama, ritual, and literature. What is necessary, however, is that these various aspects of religion are not offered as "inert" ideas disengaged from religious experience. Any purely objective consideration might be philosophy of religion, history of religions or religious anthropology but it is not religious education. The former involve education about religion, as opposed to education in religion. Significantly, subject areas other than religion are making this distinction between education "about" and education "in" an area and advocating an approach which is not only education "about" but education "in" the subject area. The education "about" approach tends to emphasize the rational approach to study while the education "in" approach includes the variety of skills or procedures which characterize a subject.[32] My suggestion is that for a comprehensive religious education to occur we need to take seriously the education "in" religion approach which also attends to education "about" religion. For understanding to be developed, a deliberate, directed opportunity for the rational appraisal of religious experience needs to occur. This begs the question of what is meant by "religious experience". I am using this to refer to a

broad range of experiences in religion which include attempts to assert religious propositions, feelings aroused by religious ritual, art or music, and the network of meaning revealed by particular religious metaphors. There is much discussion about the relationship between experience and language and in particular whether "raw" experience gives rise to language, or whether language gives rise to experience. Despite the disputes in this area, it is clear that there is a relationship between experience and language. The phenomenon of metaphor seems particularly important in this area, for not only is metaphor a significant feature of religious language but it has been argued that there is a clear relationship between metaphor and conceptual frameworks, between metaphor and aesthetics, and between metaphor and knowledge.[33] In the following chapter I will examine metaphor in order to understand its place in religious education.

ENDNOTES

1. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, The Meaning and End of Religion, Mentor Edition, The New American Library of Canada Ltd., Toronto. 1964 p. 13

2. Ibid., see especially Chapter 2

3. Patrick Burke, The Fragile Universe, (Library of Philosophy and Religion), The MacMillan Press Ltd., London. 1979 p. 1

4. See W.P. Alston's discussion "Religion" in Paul Edwards (ed), The Encyclopedia of Philosopy, vol. 7, MacMillan Publishing Co. Inc., and The Free Press, New York. 1967

5. Friedrich Schleiermacher, On Religion, Speeches to Its Cultural Despisers, trans. John Oman in Abernethy and Langford (ed), Philosophy of Religion: A Book of Readings, MacMillan and Co., New York. 1968 p. 9

6. Alfred North Whitehead, Religion in the Making, Mentor Edition, The MacMillan Co., New York p. 16

7. W.P. Alston, Op. Cit.

8. This approach to defining religion is one approach among many and it s focus as will be seen is upon religions with a literary tradition. This is particularly appropriate for my focus is on the Christian religious tradition.

9. Philip Phenix, Realms of Meaning, McGraw - Hill Book Co., Toronto. 1964 p. 244

10. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Op. Cit., p. 37

11. Alfred North Whitehead, Op. Cit., p. 14

12. Peter Winch, "Meaning and Religious Language" in Stuart Brown (ed), Reason and Religion, Cornell University Press, Ithaca. 1977 pp. 194 - 5

13. See for example Whitehead's comments in Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, Mentor Edition, New American Library, New York. 1960:

> "Religion is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind and within, the passing flux of immediate things; something which is real, yet waiting to be realized; something which is a remote possibility, and yet the greatest of present facts; something that gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach; something which is the ultimate ideal and the hopeless quest." p. 191

Ludwig Wittgenstein, in his remarks on Fraser's Golden Bough, asserts,

> When he [sic Fraser] explains to us, for example, that the king must be killed in his prime because, according to the notions of the savages, his soul would not be kept fresh otherwise, we can only say: where that practice and these views go together, the practice does not spring from the view, but both of them are there together."

quoted in S.C. Brown, Op. Cit., p. 195

14. Iris Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good, Ark Paperbacks, London. 1985 p. 74. In these remarks Murdoch makes clear the close relationship between religion and morality.

15. See for example, D.W. Hamlyn, The Theory of Knowledge, MacMillian Press Ltd., London. 1976 especially Chapter 4.

16. Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind, Barnes and Noble Books of Harper and Row, New York. 1949 pp. 25 - 61

17. D.W. Hamlyn, Op. Cit., pp. 103 - 4

18. Abraham Joshua Heschel, God in Search of Man: A Philosphy of Judaism, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York. 1955 p. 154

19. John Hick, Faith and Knowledge, Second Edition, Fontana Books, Collins Ltd., Glasgow. 1957 p. 215

20. James Fowler, "Stages of Faith and Adults' Life Cycles" in Kenneth Stokes (ed.), Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle, W.H. Sadlier, Inc., New York. 1982 pp. 179 - 180

21. Robert C. Coburn, "Metaphysical Theology and the Life of Faith", Philosophical Investigation 11:8 (July 1988) pp. 206 - 210

22. Louis Arnaud Reid, Ways of Knowledge and Experience, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London. 1961 p. 104

23. R.S. Peters, "What is Educational Process?" in R.S. Peters (ed), The Concept of Education, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London. 1967 p. 1

24. Paul Hirst, Knowledge and the Curriculum, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London. 1974

25. Michael Oakeshott, "Learning and Teaching", in R.S. Peters (ed), Op. Cit., p. 156

26. Lawrence Cremin, Traditions of American Education, Basic Books, New York. 1977 p. 134

27. Alfred North Whitehead, The Aims of Education, Mentor Edition, MacMillan Co., New York. 1953 p. 50

28. Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Seabury Press, New York. 1970 p. 59

29. Paul Hirst, "Education and Diversity of Belief", in M.C. Felderhof, Religious Education in a Pluralistic Society, Hodder and Stoughten, Toronto. 1985

30. Paulo Freire, Op. Cit.

31. D.W. Hamlyn, "The Logical and Psychological Aspects of Learning" in R.S. Peters, Op. Cit., p. 26

32. See Howard V. Marratt, "The Legitimacy of Religious Education" in M.C. Felderhof (ed), Op. Cit., p. 87

33. See for example, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live by, University of Chicago Press Ltd., Chicago 1980, Michael Polanyi and Harry Prosch, Meaning, University of Chicago Press Ltd., Chicago 1975, and Janet Martin Soskice, Metaphor and Religious Language, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1985

CHAPTER THREE

METAPHOR EXAMINED

> "Sometimes in philosophy we come up against questions which we can't answer, as if our language were a cage and we were right up against the bars ... What you call the ground of things, proved by everything, if it exists, is bound to go on, it can't not. But how is it to be expressed? Even your phrase 'the ground of being' or whatever is a metaphor which is understood in a tradition. Religion expressed this idea very strongly, very picturesquely. Now it seems like something much harder to explain, you find it hard to explain. Perhaps it needs new metaphors, a new way of thought. But that hasn't happened yet. People still think of religion in the old way, as something formal, with certain rituals, symbols, familiar pictures. You said religion was spiritual change. What changes people must reach their minds and their hearts."
>
> - Socrates to Plato
> in Iris Murdoch's, Acastos, p. 109 - 110

The presence of metaphor in language has long been recognized. It was a subject of debate and discussion among pre-Socratic philosophers and Aristotle devoted his attention to it in his Poetics and Rhetoric. Disparaged by Thomas Hobbes and John Locke as an afront to clarity of thought and denounced by logical

positivists to be at best emotive verbalism, metaphor has emerged (or re-emerged) as a linguistic phenomenon of critical importance to linguistic studies, philosophy, literary criticism, theology and psychology. The revival of interest in metaphor has produced a large body of literature and fueled much academic debate not only within the above disciplines, but across disciplines. One of the results of this interdisciplinary interest in metaphor has been a profusion of theories and a great number of definitions of metaphor. There is a need from the outset to establish a framework for our discussion by coming to terms with the words and concepts used.

Before explaining the definitions of key words and concepts, I want to make a few remarks about the place of metaphor in a discussion of religious education. It is a feature of much religious language to be metaphorical. This is not only true of language used in religion, but true specifically of language to describe the sacred. There has been considerable debate as to whether religious language is to be understood literally or whether it uses language in a special way which differs from normal language usage.[1] A substantial part of religious language is metaphorical and even apparently non-metaphorical language of God can be understood to be in some sense analogical.[2] There is an extensive body of literature addressing the question of what can be literally stated in religious propositions, but without directly entering this debate, it will become clear that an understanding of metaphor itself will show it to be a useful way of enhancing religious education. Thus throughout the Christian and Hebrew scriptures we encounter phrases such as "God is Light",

God is our Father", "God is Love", "The Lord is my Shepherd", or as found in 1 Timothy 6: 15 - 16, "The blessed and holy Sovereign, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who alone has immortality and dwells in inapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see". Ian Ramsey has identified Biblical references to the Divine which can be grouped as metaphors of family (eg. God as Father: Jeremiah 3:19, God as Mother: Deuteronomy 32:18 and Isaiah 66:13, God as husband: Hosea 2:16 and God as Friend: Jeremiah 3:4), metaphors of work or professions (eg. God as the shepherd: Ezekiel 34:31, God as the farmer: Amos 9:9, God as the dairymaid: Job 10:10, God as the builder: Amos 7:7, God as the potter: Isaiah 64:8, God as the nurse: Isaiah 1:2) and metaphors of the nation (eg. God as the king: Jeremiah 10:7, God as the warrior: Isaiah 63:1, and God as the judge: Isaiah 33:22).[3] A recent article about worship even describes "liturgy as metaphor".[4] From the standpoint of language used about the sacred some clarity about the nature of metaphor is necessary. How are metaphors to be identified? How do they function? Is all religious language metaphorical? From the perspective of religious education it is important to understand the nature of metaphor. Do metaphors affect cognitive or affective development or both? How do metaphors relate to models or mythic structures? In what ways, if any, can metaphors assist in education?

It is my view that an investigation of metaphor will reveal that it holds a unique potential both for an insight into and a basis for religious education. In

Chapter Two I described religion as encompassing a wide range of activities and phenomena from very personal experiences to more impersonal, rationally considered statements of belief. As we will see metaphors function within a broad range of human experience, thus they are personally engaging, influencing both affective and cognitive experience; they contribute to aesthetic development and they have a role to play in the formation of particular communities of faith.

I

DEFINITIONS

The problem of definition is more complex than it might seem at first glance. It is tempting to put forward a definition and then defend it by describing the rationale which lies behind it. The issues surrounding any discussion of metaphor are many, however, and definitions have been proposed which pertain to particular fields of inquiry - thus definitions arising out of literary criticism tend to be concerned with metaphor's relationship to other figures of speech such as simile, synecdoche, or metonomy; definitions arising out of philosophy tend to be concerned with metaphor's relationship to literal statements and questions of truth; and definitions arising out of psychology tend to be concerned with questions of the relationship between metaphor and perception. Nevertheless, it is useful to begin with at least a working definition so that important issues can be identified and the area under discussion mapped out more clearly. In this I follow Janet Martin

Soskice's approach and consider her definition: "Metaphor is that figure of speech whereby we speak about one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another."[5] This definition, although untechnical and general, includes several assumptions which are the subject of much discussion. These will be identified now and addressed in the course of this discussion. First of all, Soskice asserts that metaphor is a figure of speech and thereby a phenomenon of language use. To speak of the Exodus event being a metaphor for salvation or Jesus being a metaphor of God or a flag being a metaphor for a country is to employ such a broad defintion of metaphor that distinctions between metaphor and symbol, metaphor and myth, and metaphor and metonymy become blurred. Secondly, Soskice is not being vague by describing metaphor as a "thing". By this she recognizes that metaphors in language are not only physical objects. Metaphors can make use of any object or state of affairs such as the moral life, the temperament of a culture, the activity of an artisan or the growth of the psyche. Thirdly, Soskice takes a contestable position by suggesting that metaphor is "seen to be suggestive" meaning that it is "seen" to be so by a competent speaker of the language.

A. "METAPHOR IS A FIGURE OF SPEECH AND PHENOMENON OF LANGUAGE USE".

To affirm that metaphor is a form of language use is contrary to such definitions which describe metaphor as a process of the imagination, a way of

perceiving, an emotive response or a transfer of meaning. Soskice's position is that although,

> ... the successful employment of metaphor involves non-linguistic observations, percpetions and responses, it should not be thought that metaphor is primarily a process or a mental act, and only secondarily its manifestation in language. Metaphor is by definition a figure of speech and not an 'act', 'fusion' or 'perception'. Were this not the case we should not know where to look for metaphor at all.[6]

This makes the important distinction between nominal definitions which enable us to identify metaphors, and functional accounts which explore how metaphors work. This also helps us avoid the danger of obscuring our discussion of metaphor by functional theories and losing sight of the important point that metaphor is first and foremost a phenomenon of language.

To affirm that metaphor is a feature of language use is also to affirm that metaphors are not in themselves physical objects or states of affairs. This is similar to the point just made, that metaphors are not mental events. The one who claims that spring blossoms are a metaphor for the resurrection, or that a thunder storm is a metaphor for a political campaign is using the term 'metaphor' extremely loosely. Thus Colin Turbayne is not at all precise when he suggests that "Some cases of metaphor may not be expressed in words" and Nelson Goodman is being vague when he claims that "Non-verbal as well as verbal labels may, of course, be applied metaphorically, say in a cartoon of a politician as a parrot or a despot as a dragon."[7] It is important to note that there are family resemblances between

metaphor and other linguistic and non-linguistic phenomena but that it is valuable to be able to distinguish between them. Thus a metaphor as a feature of language can be distinguished from a symbol which is non-linguistic. Spring blossoms might indeed be symbols of the resurrection but it is in the verse,

> Earth with joy confesses, clothing her for spring,
> all good gifts return with her returning king;
> bloom in every meadow, leaves on every bow,
> speak his sorrows ended, hail his triumph now.[8]

that metaphors are to be found. This distinction between symbol as non-linguistic and metaphor as a linguistic phenomenon is helpful in understanding the distinction between metaphor as a feature of language and metaphor as a factor in mental events. This is not to deny that metaphors prompt a consideration of a network of implications as do symbols. Thus in the example above, "bloom in every meadow, leaves on every bow,/ speak his sorrows ended, hail his triumph now" we not only consider the literal statement that the blooms and the leaves speak and hail, but also that they are animate, personal, colourful, new and lively. If spring blossoms figure as symbols of the resurrection, then they too might prompt a consideration of flowers as lively, new, splendid, and joyful. What distinguishes between symbols and metaphor is how they are embodied. Metaphors appear in language and symbols appear in non-linguistic phenomena. Both likely function in similar ways but one is found in language use, the other elsewhere.

To affirm that metaphor is a feature of language is also to acknowledge the place of metaphor among other features of language. It is useful for our discussion

to distinguish further from several categories which exist within this close family of concepts. I have drawn a distinction between metaphor and symbol and it is also useful to make a distinction between metaphor and model. These are frequently used interchangeably by theologians.[9] An object or a state of affairs can be said to be a model when it is viewed in terms of some other object or state of affairs. It becomes apparent in this definition how closely metaphors and models are linked. The first major distinction, is that models, like symbols, do not necessarily need to be linguistic, and unlike symbols, tend to be direct comparisons. We make model airplanes and model boats which are not only objects of enjoyment, but are also used in scientific research. Models can also be conceptual. Thus we describe the functioning of the brain in terms of a computer model. When we speak, however, of neural "programming" we are using metaphorical language based on the computer model of the brain. In theological language models such as the fatherhood or motherhood of God can be used, but when we speak of "God caring for his children" or "God nurturing her little ones" we are using metaphorical language based on particular models. As Janet Martin Soskice asserts,

> Talk based on models will be metaphorical, so model and metaphor, though different categories and not to be - as frequently they are by theologians - equated, are closely linked; the latter is what we have when we speak on the basis of the former.[10]

We can also distinguish between metaphor and analogy. Analogy frequently refers to a type of relationship which is comparative and is closely related to our

discussion of models. These can include non-linguistic as well as linguistic relationships which are usually direct. Thus there can be an analogy of structure between a physical model and that which it models. In theological discourse analogy has been used to make direct comparisons between for example human attributes such as "goodness" and divine attributes such as "divine goodness". Without discussing the difficulties of this particular approach in philosophical theology, what is important to note is that analogy employs a direct comparison whereas metaphor employs a relationship that is not necessarily direct or comparative.

A metaphor, symbol, model or analogy are all in some sense an "image" which is a broad term used to refer not only to figures of speech, but also to physical objects and mental events.

Before we turn to consider tropes specifically, it is helpful to remark in passing about two literary devices which are related to and can be confused with metaphor: allegory and satire. Both of these are strictly features of language but the distinguishing feature between these and metaphor is one of scope. As in models, allegory and satire extend beyond a sentence, phrase or particular reference. Both may contain metaphor and have been called extended metaphor, but are not strictly figures of speech; they are more accurately described as forms of poetry or prose.[11]

Likewise, myth which is often described as metaphor, particularly in theological literature, has as its arena whole narratives or texts and not specific figures of speech. Thus the myth of creation in Genesis may be an extended story used to speak in terms of something else, but it is not strictly speaking metaphorical as it is when the psalmist asserts that "... his hands formed the dry land" (Psalm 95).

So far our discussion of definitions has been concerned with what Soskice calls "distant relatives" of metaphor. To turn our attention to tropes proper is to examine "near relations".[12] Many figures of speech have been identified in literary studies, not all of which will be interest here. I pass by a consideration fo hyperbole, oxymoron, and onomatopoeia for the more interesting figures of metonymy, synecdoche and simile.

Metonymy and synecdoche are closely related and at first encounter seem very like metaphor. There are subtle distinctions which can be made, however, which contribute to our understanding of metaphor. In both metonymy and synecdoche one term takes the place of, or stands in for another. In metonymy, an adjunct is used to stand for the whole as in "Ottawa is introducing a good and services tax". And in synecdoche, a species term is used in place of a genus term, or vice versa, or a more comprehensive term is used for a less comprehensive one. So one might say "... the ships opened fire" when what is meant is "... the guns opened fire" or assert "... that creature is back again" when what is meant is "... that man is back again".[13] Paul Ricouer cites Pierre Fontanier's work in describing

these figures as sharing "relations of correlation or correspondence" and "relations of connection". The former relationship being that which brings together two objects each of which constitutes an absolutely separate whole, and the latter as one in which two objects form an ensemble, a physical or metaphysical whole, the existence of one being included in the existence or idea of the other.[14] In these definitions which bring together such distinct relationships as exclusion ("absolutely separate whole") and inclusion ("included in") the almost total symmetry between definitions of metonymy and synecdoche become clear. These appear to be very like metaphor, but a distinction can be made on the functional level of semantics. To make this clear I need to discuss function as separate from form for a moment. Soskice describes the difference between metonymy and synecdoche, taken together, and metaphor as one of reference.[15] The former both involve "oblique" and "less prosaic" ways of making a direct reference. Both figures point to the absent term. Thus to take "Ottawa is introducing a goods and services tax" to mean that a city of buildings and rivers was somehow introducing a tax, or to take "the ships opened fire" as somehow meaning that boats disgorged projectiles would be a failure of comprehension. Metonymy and synecdoche function as oblique reference and stand out among tropes as being primarily ornamental. Ricouer notes that it is in the difference of relations by resemblance that metaphor is set apart from metonymy and synecdoche. Relations by resemblance are not based on a changing of the designation of things by names or nouns, but by the relationship between ideas.

The relationship is one of characterization and includes not only nouns but a whole sentence and all of its constitutive parts.[16] Thus, a metaphor if it is a good one, will suggest a whole network of ideas which an instance of either metonymy or synecdoche won't. Consider Emily Dickinson's,

> When winds take forests in their paws
> The universe is still.[17]

This is not merely a substitution of one noun for another. The impact of the metaphor lies in the association of ideas prompted by the images of winds which have paws to take up forests. Such associations may include notions of power, of ferocity, of strength, of fear and awe. In this way metaphor extends beyond simple reference and gives way to a whole network of association which promotes new ways of conceiving of something. Metonymy and synecdoche on the other hand are limited to deliberate if oblique, references which are chiefly ornamental.

Metaphor differs from simile in a straightforward manner of form. It is far more problematic to describe how it differs in function. It is a dictum of elementary school grammar that a simile is a comparison identified by the use of "like" or "as" and sometimes "unlike". This is useful for picking out occurrences of simile but does not help us in determining how it is functionally different from metaphor. This leads some writers such as Janet Martin Soskice to suggest that some forms of simile are functionally the same as metaphor.[18] She identifies two forms of simile using examples from Henry James:

> A dissatisfied mind, whatever else it may miss, is rarely in want of reasons; they bloom thick as butter cups in June.

and

> Her mind was to be his - attached to his own like a small garden-plot to a deep park. He would rake soil gently and water the flowers; he would weed the beds and gather an occasional nose-gay. It would be a pretty piece of property for a proprieter already far-reaching.

Soskice suggests that the first example is chiefly illustrative, while the second provides a model which is conducive to much development. The first is least like metaphor, the second most like metaphor and if the "like" was deleted would become one. This is an interesting attempt to make a distinction which would be helpful for our discussion. I'm not convinced that she succeeds, however, for if her first example was reconstructed as "A dissatisfied mind, whatever else it may miss, is rarely in want of reasons: they are buttercups blooming thickly in June" we have a metaphor which is at least as uninteresting and merely illustrative as the simile. If there is a difference between simile and metaphor other than form, it cannot be indicated with terms such as "more interesting" or "conducive to more development". Donald Davidson notes that the most obvious semantic difference between metaphor and simile is that the former are usually false while the latter are always true.[19] In the case of similes everything is in some way like everything else. Mr. Brown is like a pig, an airplane is like a bird, a classroom of students is like a zoo, but it is false that literally Mr. Brown is a pig, an airplane is a bird and contrary to what many instructors feel, a classroom of students is not a zoo. There is another feature of metaphor which cannot be attributed to simile and which the rhetorical

tradition calls catachresis.

Catachresis is the phenomenon whereby a term is applied to an object or situation for which no term exists in vocabulary. We speak of stems of glasses and foothills; we refer to pasteurized milk; we hear of things impacting other things; and we wear clothes made of nylon. All these are examples of words given to fill a lexical gap. The first example of stems and foot are metaphors but not all examples of catachresis are metaphorical. Language is extended by metonymy (or synecdoche) as when a scientist gives his or her name to a process or theory as in our example of pasteurized milk from the process developed by Louis Pasteur. Language is extended by parallel syntax as when a noun is used as a verb as in the case of "impacting" and language is extended by neologism or a pure invention of words such as "nylon" to parallel cotton and rayon. The extension of language by metonymy/synecdoche, by parallel syntax, or by neologism is certainly frequent and of itself interesting, but what is significant for this study is that whereas all of these fill gaps in our vocabulary, only extension by metaphor is also able to create such gaps.[20] When we name the amount of electrical current that one volt can send through one ohm and amp (after the physicist Ampere) we are engaging in a relatively straightforward act of naming. To describe electrical energy as a "current" however, is to create new ways of considering electrical energy. So electricity flows, is stored, and can be "dammed" in some way. Similarly, when we describe light as a wave we create new possibilities for thinking about it, new categories and new

hypotheses. This feature of metaphor known as catachresis is particularly interesting for any consideration of knowledge and cognition. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson discuss the implications of using metaphors in this way by pointing our how pervasive metaphors are in our language and suggesting that metaphors shape the ways we name and interpret our world.[21] This aspect of metaphor is critical to an understanding of religious language and will be considered later in the discussion.

B. "IN METAPHOR WE SPEAK ABOUT ONE "THING" IN TERMS OF ANOTHER".

In the working definition of metaphor put forward by Soskice, metaphor is described as that figure of speech whereby we speak about one thing in terms which are suggestive of another. To speak of one "thing" is significant for in doing so it is recognized that not only can physical objects be metaphorical but so can a whole range of phenomena. It is an example of metaphor to say "Man is a wolf" or "Richard is a lion", and it is also metaphorical to claim, "The mind is on hold", "The world is in ferment", or that "Christians are a royal priesthood". This may seem too obvious to be worth noting, except that it will be useful in our later discussion of theories of metaphor. Some theorists claim that metaphor involves the presence of two terms in a relationship of comparison.[22] This is frequently considered to be a simple two term relationship such that x is y in the form of the examples above. There are however, clear examples of metaphor which are not of the form x is y.

We may speak of "a fertile imagination", "a wealth of ideas", "a skillfully crafted argument", "writhing script" or "bitter disappointment". It is not explicit what the two terms are in each of these latter examples nor is it always clear what the nature of the comparison is.

C. "METAPHOR IS SEEN TO BE SUGGESTIVE".

In this third dimension to her working definition, Soskice takes a stand which is clearly linked to a theory of how metaphor functions. For she suggests that metaphors function not within the narrow confines of two terms, or even a sentence or phrase, but within the semantic framework of a hearer or speaker. This position will be considered within the larger discussion of a theory of metaphor itself.

We have seen that it is difficult to maintain a discussion defining metaphor without implying or assuming certain views as to how metaphor functions. Thus Soskice's definition with which we began,

> Metaphor is that figure of speech whereby we speak about one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another.

and which led us into a discussion of metaphor as a figure of speech and a phenomenon of language, implies the acceptance of certain theoretical postitions regarding how metaphor functions. So we turn to a consideration of the dominant theories of metaphor.

II

THEORIES OF METAPHOR

Much philosophical concern with metaphor has been directed to a study of the meaning and truth of metaphorical statements. These are extremely important concerns, but in the midst of discussions about these aspects of metaphor, there are other aspects which are of significance, particularly for our discussion of metaphor and religious education. Before exploring the questions of the meaning and truth of metaphorical statements, I want to draw attention to three other important areas in which metaphor functions: the relationship of metaphor to a way of life, to moral commitments and to the formation of intimate communities.

The first of these is related to my comment in Chapter Two that religion is a way of life for the religious person. At a fundamental level the nature of religion is such that for the person we would recognize and identify as "religious", religious categories shape and dispose him or her toward a particular view of the world and a particular attitude toward the world. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have emphasized that the use of metaphor in language is pervasive, that metaphors reflect our conceptual systems and that in significant ways the metaphors we employ structure our experience of the world.

> We have found ... that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.
>
> The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details. Our concepts

> structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities.[23]

To show how extensive the presence of metaphor in language is, Lakoff and Johnson identify hundreds of metaphors which are a part of everyday speech. An example of this is our talk about argument as war. In this example a number of metaphorical statements can be identified which reveal how the concept that argument is war is embedded in language. Consider:

> Your claims are indefensible.
>
> He attacked every weak point in my argument.
>
> His criticisms were right on target.
>
> I demolished his argument.
>
> I've never won an argument with him.
>
> You disagree? Okay, shoot!
>
> If you use that strategy, he'll wipe you out.
>
> He shot down all of my arguments.[24]

As Lakoff and Johnson point out, it is not that we just talk about arguments in terms of war, but that it is our experience that we win or lose arguments, we identify opponents, we consider strategies - both for defending our positions and for attacking our opponent's position. Much of what we do when we engage in argument is structured within the concept of war. It is in this way, that the concept of "argument as war" is considered to be a "metaphor we live by". David Cooper

has argued that such individual metaphors are really "dead metaphors" and so have passed into language as literal statements in the form of homonyms. In his view, Lakoff and Johnson are correct, however, in suggesting that "metaphorizing" ("the activity of systematically talking about one domain in terms lifted from another, an activity that generates inter alia, metaphors"[25]) is a common feature of language. Cooper writes, "I shall take it, without further ado, that metaphorizing ... is a pervasive feature of everyday language."[26]

Lakoff and Johnson are using the term "metaphor" in a broader sense than Soskice. Their definition is, "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another."[27] Although they find metaphors in language, their emphasis is on non-verbal (ie. conceptual) metaphors although I'm not sure that without a well-developed theory of cognition we can draw too sharp a distinction between concepts and words. At times, they also use the word "metaphor" in ways similar to what we have identified as "models" above. They use "metaphor" to refer primarily to "metaphorical concepts". And so they suggest that,

> The metaphor is not merely in the words we use - it is in our very concept of an argument. The language of argument is not practical, fanciful, or rhetorical; it is literal. We talk about arguments that way because we conceive of them that way - and we act according to the way we conceive of things.[28]

This is a peculiar use of the term metaphor for it is unclear how a concept can be metaphorical. It might be more precise to speak of "conceptual models". These

conceptual models may indeed be revealed in language as metaphors and the metaphors indicate a particular way of thinking, but to speak of a "metaphorical concept" is, I think, confusing and possibly misleading. Their important claim is that human thought processes are largely metaphorical and that metaphors are possible in language because metaphorical concepts are part of a person's conceptual scheme. To be more precise, they claim that metaphors reveal the ways in which we conceptualize. In their work they attempt to classify different kinds of metaphorical concepts (which more strictly speaking might be called "conceptual models") such as "argument is war" which they refer to as a structural image, concepts which refer to our experiences as entities or substances such as "Inflation is the cause of unemployment", "My mind is full", "There's so much hatred in the world" as ontological metaphors and those metaphorical concepts which organize systems of concepts such as "He feels up", "The economy is up", "Her thoughts are elevated" as orientational metaphors. Some of these examples are so commonplace that we do not immediately consider them to be metaphorical.

In this theory of metaphor, conceptual models and figures of speech are clearly related. They acknowledge that different cultures may have different conceptual models. Another culture may conceive of argument in terms of a dance and so the metaphors employed have to do with balance, aesthetics, partnership and related ideas. The cultures employing such different metaphors, however, may not recognize each other's use as referring to "argument".

The implications for religious education are significant. For a religious person to say that "The Lord is my Shepherd" may simply imply a whole way of life in which the assertion "There is a God" may be less significant than related attitudes such as "God is a trustworthy guide"; "we are not alone"; "we will be cared for throughout all experiences in life". This is quite a different experience than having an attitude toward the world (to say nothing of women!) associated with such a metaphor as "Man is master of the Universe" with its related concepts of "creation is to be used"; creation is to be used for human ends"; "Man stands against nature"; "the world is to be subdued". The metaphors we employ can reveal our view of the world, and may also enable us to construct alternative views. This is what lies, I think, behind Iris Murdoch's assertion that "the most essential and fundamental aspect of culture is the study of literature, since this is an education in how to picture and understand human situations."[29] The most essential and fundamental aspect of religious culture may be a careful attention to its literature which is the source of the religious metaphors which shape the religious person's attitudes and way of life. This is not to say that a religious framework is complete and separate from a non-religious framework. Lakoff and Johnson recognize that there are various metaphorical concepts within sub-cultures, and that within each of these different attitudes and concepts will be given priority, yet there will be many shared attitudes and concepts within cultures themselves. So the study of religious literature may rather than offering completely independent metaphors, offer

alternatives within the dominant culture. Even within religious traditions there are a variety of competing metaphors. "God the Father" (Matthew 6:8,9) modifies and is modified by the metaphorical concept of "the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the deep" (Genesis 1:2).

Secondly, there is a relationship as well, between conceptual models and values and the relationship between religion and morality can be understood in part as a relationship through a network of association suggested by key metaphors.

> The most fundamental values in a culture will be coherent with the metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in the culture ... So it seems that our values are not independent but must form a coherent system with the metaphorical concepts we live by.[30]

Metaphors in religious literature are a source of moral vision for the religious person. The metaphor "God is Father" may involve related concepts such as "All people are brothers and sisters", "I am my brother's/sister's keeper" and the metaphor of "God is the Judge" may involve related concepts such as "My actions matter and will be examined", "I am accountable for my moral decisions", and "We do not have complete license for any action." There appears to be a relationship between metaphors and morality such that metaphors which reflect an individual's attitudes and coneptual framework suggest a network of associated concepts whose expressions include statements of value.

Thirdly, metaphors not only provide an insight into the way an individual views the world and thus give us an insight into one's cognitive approach to

experience and one's moral dispositions, but they also have a role to play in an individual's affective experience. Both Ted Cohen and David Cooper suggest that aside from the interest and controversy surrounding the cognitive status of metaphor, metaphors also are sustained by and contribute to the development of intimacy between individuals.[31] In itself, this is an important consideration and significant to our discussion of religious education. At least one of the features of religion identified previously, is that the religious person participates in a community of faith. To participate in a community of faith involves participating in shared ritual, identifying with a common set of beliefs, and joining with others in the embracing of a unifying story or myth. These involve being a part of what Lakoff and Johnson call the culture or the sub-culture of people. A religious community may be the dominant culture or a sub-culture within a dominant culture. Personal relationships are enhanced within the community by the experience of shared assumptions and shared understandings. Metaphors are involved with the cultivation of intimacy within a culture. The role of intimacy in our discussion of metaphor arises from our discussion of how metaphors function.

The interpretation of an instance of metaphor requires that the hearer be able to exercise successfully some or all of the following:[32]

1. to state at least one possible meaning of the sentence uttered.
2. to determine the correct meaning among competing meanings.

3. to recognize the significance of the statement (that is, is it a command, a joke, an assertion, etc.)

4. to be able to determine the correct reference to expressions such as pronouns which have a variable reference.

5. to reconstruct full sentences from partial ones.

6. to consider the possible interpretations implied by the speaker.

These abilities, at least in part, constitute what Cooper terms "interpretive competence". In an "ordinary" utterance, most members of a given culture could reasonably be expected to exercise these abilities and be able to exhibit a degree of "interpretive competence". Thus sentences such as "That bank is very large" (said while pointing at a large building) or "There's a garage 'round the corner" (said in response to request for gasoline) will be understood by a large portion of the population even though the first will involve determining what kind of bank (river or commercial) is being referred to and the second involves a consideration of possible interpretations. These "ordinary" sentences involve a degree of interpretive competence which most members of the speech community can be expected to have.

Within this speech community there exists what Cooper terms a "general intimacy".[33] Although this general intimacy amounts to what might be called a "weak bond", it consists of the sharing of a common pool of information, along with the abilities and intelligence necessary to use that information in interpreting what

is said. This may seem too general to be called "intimacy", but nevertheless is not to be underestimated. The experience of being the only one of a group of people whose language we do not know provides a sense of what it is to be an outsider to such a group. This general intimacy is also the basis for a great number of activities which involve greater intimacy. To communicate with a common language requires a degree of intimacy which unites its users.

Cooper also identifies what he calls an "extraordinary utterance".[34] This type of utterance is one in which special information or abilities are required for its interpretation. Examples might include the use of slang, familiarity with tacit customs, or specific information about the situation of the sentence user. Instances of these "extraordinary utterances" will be justified when they are used on the assumption that the hearer will be able to interpret what is uttered.

These extraordinary utterances will involve a "special intimacy". That is the users of the extraordinary utterances will be bonded by a shared association of information, and abilities. They will be a subset (sometimes very large, sometimes very small) of those with general interpretive competence. Cooper makes two generalizations from these observations: firstly, those who are able to interpret a particular extraordinary utterance will also be able to interpret a wide range of related utterances, and secondly, they will also share not only the ability to interpret this wide range of extraordinary utterances, but they will also be united by a wide range of common experiences such as work, interests, environment, sensibilities,

linguistic experience and the like.[35]

David Cooper asserts that metaphors are a form of extradordinary utterances because they cannot be interpreted soley on the basis of 1 - 6 above.[36] It seems that there are some common metaphors which can be interpreted by a general user of a language (for example some of the metaphors from the argument is war concept above: "I shot down his argument," or "He blew me out of the water."). This point is not central to the main discussion which is to emphasize that metaphors, and in particular extraordinary metaphors (that is those which are employed by a subset of language users) involve a degree of intimacy between users. Not only will this be an intimacy involving the shared abilities to employ metaphors, but will also include the sharing of a broad range of experiences. Quoting Nathaniel Hawthorne, Cooper describes it as "...a kind of intimacy...between...cultivated minds, who had as wide a field as the whole sphere of human thought and study, to meet upon."[37] By employing and responding to a particular metaphor, user and hearer are "signalling" that they are members of a particular subset (which may be exclusive or extremely large).

> So, in what might be called a 'full metaphorical exchange' - the utterance of a metaphor, its appropriate interpretation by hearers and a capable assessment of that interpretation by the speaker - the intimacy between speaker and hearers presupposed by the original utterance will be reinforced.[38]

The employment of metaphor in speech is a reinforcement of intimacy within the particular subset of users within a culture. It presupposes an intimacy and

emphasizes that intimacy which extends beyond language use to a sharing of environment, sensibilities, etc.

To take his case further, Cooper also suggests that metaphor presupposes an even greater intimacy than an explicit equivalent of a given metaphor because its use presupposes an attitude or viewpoint which must be assumed if the use of the metaphor is justified.[39] This greater intimacy being that the hearers also share a particular context or perspective. Consider Cooper's example: A man who has just married an opera singer says "I've just married a regular ticket to the opera". In addition to the explicit interpretations that he has just married someone who can provide him with a regular ticket to the opera, he may also be revealing (depending on his circumstances) a latent male chauvinism (he has married because he found a use-ful bride) or that he is an ardent opera lover (and has found a bride who shares his passion). These other "intimacies" can only be shared by those who knew him personally. The metaphor would have more import and particular emphasis for a select subset of users. This latter aspect of the employment of the metaphor could not be part of the interpretation of the metaphor itself, but only revealed in a commentary on the metaphor. The use of a particular metaphor in a particular situation thus involves a further and particular intimacy.

That intimacy and metaphor are related is of interest to religious educators for communities of people are created as a regular feature of religion. Education in a religious tradition's language, literature and thus repository of metaphor will

contribute to the potential for increased intimacy between particular language users. This is a mixed blessing. There may be a sustained need for intimacy between human beings, and opportunities for the development of a genuine intimacy will be welcomed. Nevertheless, the use of metaphor may establish false and pernicious forms of intimacy such as the creation of an illusion that there is more intimacy present than there actually exists or creating communities based on false premises (for example, the use of the metaphors of "motherland" or "fatherland" in times of war may increase the bonds of patriotism but obscure other bonds such as those of a common humanity).

We have considered how metaphors function in relation to a person's conceptual framework or "faith perspective", noted in passing a relationship between metaphor and morality and examined the role of metaphor in the cultivation of intimacy. Further theories of metaphor whch have been developed can be classified into several main positions which can serve to illustrate the different approaches to the question "How do metaphors function?" and a question which overlaps it "What is the meaning of a metaphorical statement?". These questions are all related to what Max Black calls the "logical grammar" of metaphor and his 1955 contribution to the meeting of the Aristotelian Society has been a major landmark in philosophical discussions of metaphor.[40] In that discussion Black identifies three main approaches to an analyses of metaphor: substitution theories, comparison theories and interaction theories. In addition to these there can be added what may

be called emotive theories of metaphor. I follow Max Black in my discussion of the first three.

The first section of this chapter has dealt primarily with syntax, with the form of metaphor and how it differs (when it does) from other syntactical forms. As I developed that discussion I pointed out that at times we could clearly identify metaphor by its syntax, but in other instances it became necessary to make reference to the function of metaphor, that is to how it produced meaning if at all.

The first theory identified by Black is a substitution view of metaphor which was the most widely accepted theory until this century. In this view, to use Black's example "The chairman ploughed through the discussion", one might explain the metaphor by saying that the speaker wants to say something about a chairman and his behaviour in some meeting. Instead of saying directly or plainly that the chairman rushed through the agenda, dealt summarily with objections or rudely suppressed irrelevance, the speaker chose to use a word, "ploughed", which by definition means something else. Nevertheless, an intelligent hearer, well aquainted with the language, can easily guess what is intended.[41] This theory assumes that the metaphorical expression (M) is a substitute for some other literal expression (L) which would have expressed the same meaning much more clearly had it been used instead of M. In the substitution theory the meaning of M is the literal meaning of L. It is the responsibility of the intelligent hearer of such a sentence to make the appropriate substitution and thus discover the correct meaning.

This theory of metaphor is what is assumed in Locke's famous remarks,

> ... since wit and fancy find easier entertainment in the world than dry truth and real knowledge, figurative speeches and allusion in language will hardly be admitted as an imperfection or abuse of it. I confess, in discourses where we seek rather pleasure and delight than information and improvement, such ornaments as are borrowed from them can scarce pass for faults. But yet if we would speak of things as they are, we must allow that all the art of rhetoric, besides order and clearness, all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgement, and so indeed are perfect cheats, and, therefore, however laudable or allowable oratory may render them in harangues and popular addresses, they are certainly, in all discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, wholly to be avoided; and where truth and knowledge are concerned, cannot but be thought a great fault, either of the language or the person that makes use of them.[42]

Black points out that, as in Locke's view, the substitution theory has a pejorative ring to it which lays responsibility for it squarely upon the shoulders of the user. Why then, he asks, would any writer or speaker use such a literary device?[43] The answers seem weak to say the least. The first, he suggests, is due to a lexical gap and therefore metaphor is employed as catachresis. But, as Black points out, if an instance of catachresis serves a genuine need the new sense introduced to a word will quickly pass into literal language and thus no longer be metaphorical. This is what has occurred with the word "orange" which once applied to a colour is now also commonly applied to a fruit. Secondly, when metaphor is used not as an instance of catachresis, then it is seen as an instrument of style. In this sense metaphors are seen to make language interesting and pleasureable. Here the

traditional view of metaphor as a decorative or ornamental device is emphasized.

The substitution theory and versions of it, seem to force metaphor into too small a field of operations. What makes metaphor interesting is not that it is a fascinating challenge to determine its literal meaning, but that its meaning is multi-dimensional and even suggestive of new insights. Thus to say, "He is a fox" is not only to indicate that he is cunning, but perhaps that he is quick and mischievous. Those who defend a substitution theory of metaphor might be quick to reply, however, that to say "He is a fox" could also mean he is quick and he is mischievous. By the conventions of the use of the word fox in our language it has come to mean literally not only cunning, but quick and mischievous. A careful student of language might indeed be able to list all the interpretations of the word "fox" which could then be applied to the metaphor. Thus "He is a fox" might mean:

a) He is cunning

b) He is mischievous

c) He is quick

d) He is agile

and so on until all the possible literal meanings of the word are detailed. To assert "He is a fox", is just to assert one or all of the possible literal translations.

It can be asserted, however, that if this is possible then the phrase ceases to be metaphorical but in some sense is a case of "dead metaphor". True metaphors cannot be translated in this way. The subject of "dead metaphors" is another

interesting but tangential issue to this discussion, so I only want to remark that this strategy appears to be circular in that the conclusion of what constitutes metaphor is based on an intitial (arbitrary?) definition.

David Cooper suggests that a much more serious difficulty for the substitution theory is how it addresses the question of new and novel instances of metaphor.[44] Thus he suggests that in a phrase such as Hofmannstahl's description of our minds as "nothing but dovecots", a new metaphor is created which cannot be translated in the way in which we listed all the meanings for "He is fox" because there have been no conventions established for such use. There seems to be at least three responses available to the substitution theorist:

1. She might agree that since there is no established convention for such a metaphor it is meaningless. It is purely ornamental and although arresting has little to offer in terms of our understanding of the mind.

2. She might suggest that although there is no established convention for the juxtaposition of "minds" and "dovecots" we can, nevertheless create a list of possible translations from the usual meanings of the words that are used and thus discover its literal meaning. Thus if our minds are "nothing but dovecots" they might be a) compartmentalized, b) untidy, c) abusive, or d) decrepit. Any metaphorical meaning is simply the literal meaning made clear.

3. This second strategy is very close to the third in that it may involve a refining of the substitution theory to include a consideration of new and novel

metaphors. This is indeed the case for those who adopt what Max Black has called the comparison theory which is a special case of the substitution theory.

The comparison theory accounts for any claimed transformation of literal meaning by metaphor through a function of similarity or comparison. Thus the metaphorical meaning of A is F is identical, suggests Cooper, to the literal meaning that A is like F.[45] And Max Black more cautiously, or perhaps less precisely, suggests that in a comparison theory the metaphorical meaning (M) is either similar or analogous in meaning to its literal equivalent (L).[46]

In the comparison theory metaphors are understood to be condensed simile. To assert that our minds are "nothing but dovecots" is to mean that our minds are like dovecots and that the literal meaning of this as in 2. above can then be specified. There are at least two difficulties with this variation of the substitution theory.

Firstly, as Max Black suggests, there is a dangerous vaqueness to the nature of the comparison. As I pointed out in the earlier discussion of simile, in some respects anyting can be found to be like anything else. So in the example of our "minds are like dovecots" it is a bit arbitrary to stop at the list given in 2. above. One could conceivably produce an immense list based on comparison which would eventually border on the ridiculous. Thus as we "unpacked" the literal meaning of the dovecot metaphor with our suggestions L_1, L_2, L_3, etc. we might include "our minds are like: boxes, apartment buildings, dormitories, bathroom cubicles, prison

camps, etc.". The metaphorical statement is not a kind of eliptical simile which involves a comparison of literal statements. It, rather, evokes comparisons in which the only limits are imposed by the terms themselves. This view is developed in my discussion of the versions of the interaction theory of metaphor.

Another problem with the comparison version of the substitution theory is that although the ellipsis idea is at first glance attractive in the case of metaphors with a simple x is y form with metaphorical term being y, the difficulties become immense when other forms are employed. David Cooper suggests such examples as:

a) O for a beaker full of the warm South! (Keats)

b) The moving finger writes: and having writ moves on. (O. Khayyam)

c) Push Off!

d) The song is you.

e) Numbers are my only friends.

What could any of these be an ellipsis of? To render a) as "O for something like a beaker full of the warm South!" or "O for a beaker full of something like the warm South!" could both be correct literal translations, but clearly do not mean the same thing. It may be possible to develop a literal translation of a), b) or c) which employ similes, but they would not prove them to be ellipsis. Identity statements such as d) prove to mean something different when like is added as does e) in which a rendering of "numbers are like my only friends" produces a meaning

opposite that of the original statement. Even when we are able to suggest a wide range of meanings from possible comparisons there is further difficulty. Once we depart from the simple x is y form of metaphor there is no way to know which version of the translation is correct.[47]

A related theory which I alluded to above is the third possible view suggested by Black and which might provide an account for new and novel metaphors. The interaction theory is based on the earlier work of I.A. Richards and focuses on the interaction between the thoughts suggested in the metaphor. Richards writes,

> In the simplest formulation, when we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction.[48]

This theory leads to the view that metaphor does not merely state indirectly what can be said literally (substitution theory) nor that a metaphor's meaning is what is presented as the result of some similarity (comparison theory), but that our thoughts about the subject and predicate of a metaphor are "active together" and "interact" to produce a new meaning.[49] To describe how the two thoughts interact, Richards introduces two terms "tenor" and "vehicle", defining tenor as "... the underlying idea or principal subject which the vehicle or figure means."[50] There is some agreement that an ambiguity exists in Richards use of these terms but they serve nevertheless to indicate that in the interaction theory of metaphor two diverse thoughts, one being the principal subject, and the other being the mode in which it is expressed are brought together and are creative of new insights or ways of seeing the subject.

Part of the ambiguity arises out of what it means to say that "two thoughts interact". A thinking subject may enjoy and conceive of new possibilities through the conjunction of two opposing or differing concepts, but it is unclear what it means for thoughts to interact unless we are attributing a vitality and autonomy to thoughts that is beyond the ordinary (see note 49). It is in respect to this that Janet Martin Soskice has proposed in her defintion that "metaphor is that figure of speech whereby we speak of something in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another." This implies that someone does the seeing, or thinking in order to make the association required by two juxtaposed ideas. Metaphors function for an imaginative, thinking subject. The interaction view of metaphor does, despite the ambiguities involved, suggest that it is possible to use new and novel forms of metaphor because the effectiveness of metaphor does not lie in a form of comparison, but in the juxtaposition of concepts produced by the metaphoric relationship.

Max Black develops Richards' work in proposing his interactive theory. In commenting on Richards' suggestions and offering his own view, Black discusses the metaphor "The poor are the negroes of Europe". In this view of metaphor our thoughts about the European poor and the history of the negro interact to produce new insights and meaning.

> I think this must mean that in the given context the focal word "negroes" obtains a new meaning, which is not quite its meaning in literal uses, nor quite the meaning which any literal substitute would have. The new context (the 'frame' of the metaphor, in my terminology) imposes extensions of meaning

> upon the focal word. And I take Richards to be saying that for the metaphor to work the reader must remain aware of the extension of meaning - must attend to both the old and new meanings together.[51]

Black uses the terms "focus" and "frame" to describe the metaphorical idea "negroes" (focus) in the above example, and "the poor of Europe" (frame). Here the focus is the word used metaphorically and the frame is the literal subject provided by the rest of the sentence. The central question raised by his view is the nature of the "extensions of meaning upon the focal word." He suggests that "the secret and mystery of metaphor" is in the connection between the two ideas and that the extension occurs through this dynamic connection.[52]

To explain how this extension functions, Black introduces the metaphor of a "filter". In his example of "man is a wolf" two subjects are identified, "man" which is the principal subject and "wolf" which is the subsidiary subject. What is required for the metaphor to function is that the reader know not only the standard dictionary definition of "wolf", but its "system of associated commonplaces".[53] This system of associated commonplaces is similar to what I referred to above when describing the literal meaning of a term L to consist of a number of assertions L_1, L_2, L_3, etc. conventionally agreed upon. When we use the frame "man is a wolf" we are evoking this wolf-system of associated commonplaces. The filter of a metaphor works when the principal subject accentuates, or disguises certain features of the system of associated commonplaces. Thus in the statement "man is a wolf", the interaction of "man" and "wolf" highlight such features of wolves as a)

carnivorous, b) predatory, c) gregarious and disguises other features such as a) furry, b) rabid, and c) quadrapeds. In the process of filtering, "The wolf-metaphor suppresses some details, emphasizes others - in short organizes our view of man."[54] This filtering functions in much the same way as one might look at the stars through a piece of smoked glass with clear lines. The glass would hide some stars and reveal others, thus organizing our view of the night sky. This organizing function is distinctive of metaphor and does not allow it to be reduced to literal terms. Metaphor is not a matter of simple substitution or comparison. "It would be more illuminating ... to say that the metaphor creates the similarity than to say that it formulates some similarity antecedently existing."[55] This concept of "filtering" is very attractive, but it is subject to serious difficulties. It is itself a metaphor and thus not easily "unpacked". How this filtering takes place is still one of the "secrets and mysteries of metaphor". It is not obvious that this organizing of experience leads to new insights. The concept of filter suggests that what is filtered are those things that antecedently exist. For how does a filter create similarities? This image of the coloured glass with clear lines helps us understand how a metaphor may organize experience and it might be argued that the ways in which the night sky is revealed does suggest ways of organizing what is seen and simply to turn the glass ninety degrees would be to reveal new patterns and perhaps new similarities. There is still however something of importance in this view of metaphor as a "filtering" experience. For although a filter only filters what antecedently exists, when certain

aspects are highlighted or diminished our attention shifts from one aspect to another. What might have seemed insignificant through one filter might take on enormous significance through another while other overwhelming aspects which dominated our attention then fade into the background. Consider the two metaphors "man is a wolf" and "man is a spark of the Divine". Each leaves us with a distinctly different set of concepts about humanity.

A far more damaging critique of Black is made by Janet Martin Soskice. She argues that Black has in fact misunderstood Richards' position when he interprets Richards' "tenor" and "vehicle" to mean the two terms comparable to his "metaphorical focus" and "literal frame". This makes individual terms the focus for our consideration of metaphor which Soskice claims is a fundamental error.[56] Black's claim that two distinct subjects are present also restricts his theory to relatively simple instances of metaphor. It can be used to discuss "man is a wolf" and "The poor are the negroes of Europe", but is less useful in discussing Richards' metaphor of a fever:

> A stubborn and unconquerable flame
> Creeps in his veins and drinks the streams of life.[57]

It might be argued that there are still two subjects present albeit the subject "fever" is present in the mind of the reader. This would still require some explanation of the piling of the second metaphor "creeps in his veins and drinks" upon the metaphor "flame". It is much more difficult to make sense of Richards later examples of "giddy brink", "jovial wine" or "daring wound" on Black's two subject

account.[58] There are no obvious ways to identify a metaphorical focus or literal frame for these latter examples.

Soskice's approach is to return to and develop some of Richard's ideas in what, borrowing a phrase from Richards, she terms the interanimative theory of metaphor.[59] This is based on Richards' view that the meanings of utterances are based on complete utterances and surrounding contexts and not by individual words in isolation. He developed his theory to counter the eighteenth century "usage" view of meaning as proper word usage embraced by literary critics and rhetoricians. Thus a distinction can be made between tenor and vehicle without a strict reliance on words proper or upon two subjects. Meaning is created in the "interanimation" between the words and concepts of the complete utterance. Thus in the example of the fever just considered, the unstated "fever" is the tenor and the description of the flame is the vehicle. This example also includes what Richards calls a "subsidiary vehicle". The primary vehicle is the flame, and the subsidiary vehicle is that which describes the flame as an animal which "creeps in his veins and drinks the streams of life". Richards' terms, interpreted as not necessarily applied to specific words or subjects in an utterance, can also be used to discuss "giddy brink" or "jovial wine". Where there is no clear second distinct subject in these examples, brink or wine can be referred to as tenors and their adjectives as vehicles. Soskice recognizes that a second subject may be postulated (although there is no evidence to recommend one subject over another as in the first example someone's giddiness

who stands too near the edge of a high cliff, or someone's giddiness who has had too much good wine, and in the second example, someone's joviality who loves to wander mountain tracks, or someone's joviality who drinks plenty of good wine). What is significant for Soskice's position is that she argues that,

> It is only by seeing that a metaphor has only one true subject which tenor and vehicle conjointly depict and illumine that a full, interactive, or interanimative, theory is possible.[60]

This is an important development of the theory, for what Soskice claims is that metaphors, rather than being ornamental, or providing information in a figurative way, create new insights, and provide unique cognitive content. It is this claim that is implied in her definition of metaphor as "speaking about one thing in terms of which are suggestive of another". It is the interaction or interanimation of associated systems which result in a new way of conceiving of something. She examines Virginia Woolf's description of Mrs. Ramsey in To the Lighthouse,

> Never did anybody look so sad. Bitter and black, half-way down, in the darkness, in the shaft which ran from the sunlight to the depths, perhaps a tear formed; a tear fell; the waters swayed this way and that, received it, and were at rest. Never did anybody look so sad.[61]

What is being spoken of, she asserts, is not a private grief and a shaft of some kind, but only a deep, private grief. The private, living grief is the subject, but its description is not complete by that formulation. It is inadequate to describe the tenor, the subject as a private, living, profound grief and the vehicle is not the shaft alone. Together the tenor and the vehicle interact with one another. The

metaphor and its meaning are not, cannot be separated. The metaphor is not descriptive of a previously discerned human condition, but evokes a unique meaning that is this subject.

> It is in this way that a metaphor is genuinely creative and says something that can be said in no other way, not as an ornament to what we already know but as an embodiment of a new insight.[62]

The meaning evoked by the use of metaphor in this example cannot be reduced to literal statements. What is described is uniquely expressed by the metaphorical formulation.

Soskice also emphasizes that the associated systems may also be developed within the larger context of the utterance. In this way metaphors are used within models, the latter providing the context for the former.

This takes us a step forward in responding to the problem of new and novel metaphors and also to complex metaphors which are not in the basic x is y form. There still exists a serious degree of unclarity, however. It is necessary to describe more fully what it is for the tenor and vehicle to interact in a single focus. "Interact" is itself a metaphor as is "interanimate" and how this phenomenon takes place requires further ellucidation. Nevertheless, the argument is strong enough to indicate that in addition to its role in creating intimacy, and influencing moral attitudes and a person's way of life, metaphor is also to be considered seriously as having an important role in cognitive claims. Metaphors in religious language may involve a special type of cognitive claim. Acknowledging the unique status of

religious metaphors (whose subject is the sacred) a case has been made for the serious consideration of metaphors having cognitive status.

The emphasis within recent philosophical analyses of metaphor has been on the meaning and truth of metaphorical statements. There are two assumptions which may be identified in this interest. First, it may by assumed that because of this dominant interest, that if the weight of argument suggests (contrary to my discussion) that metaphor cannot be a vehicle of meaning or knowledge, then it has no value whatsoever, and secondly, implied by the first, that knowledge is the measure of all else.

My discussion of metaphor has attempted to highlight certain features and issues regarding metaphor and its interest to religious educators. As I suggested in Chapter 2, religion covers a broad range of phenomena from the very personal to the very impersonal and public. In this chapter I have shown that metaphor corresponds with this range of phenomena such that it reveals and contributes to the personal conceptual framework and individual ways of life by which an individual approaches the world. Metaphor also plays a role in the development of intimacy between language users thus contributing to the establishment of communities of people and is a factor in understanding moral attitudes. Finally, although there is a great deal of debate over the matter, metaphor functions in discussions of the public realm of propositional assertions. All these features of

metaphor affecting such a broad range of experience qualify it to be an important vehicle of education. The pervasiveness of metaphor in religion demands attention from all who take religious education seriously.

ENDNOTES

1. Richard Swinburne, The Coherence of Theism, Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1977 p. 50ff.

2. Ibid., p. 60

3. Ian Ramsey, "Talking of God: Models, Ancient and Modern" in Jerry Gill (ed), Christian Empiricism: Ian Ramsey, W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids. 1974 pp. 121 - 3

4. Mark Searle, "Liturgy as Metaphor", in Worship, Vol. 55, No. 2, March 1981

5. Janet Martin Soskice, Metaphor and Religious Language, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1985 p. 14

6. Ibid., p. 16

7. Quoted in Ibid., p. 17

8. From the hymn "Welcome, Happy Morning" by Verantius Fortunatus and translated by John Ellerton.

9. See for example: Sallie McFague, Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language, Fortress Press, Philadelphia. 1982 and Gloria Durka and Joanmarie Smith, Modelling God: Religious Education for Tomorrow, Paulist Press, New York. 1976

10. Janet Martin Soskice, Op. Cit., p. 55

11. Ibid., p. 56

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., p. 57

14. Paul Ricouer, The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary studies of the creation of meaning in language, trans. Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello, SJ, University of Toronto Press, Toronto. 1977 p. 56

15. Soskice, Op. Cit., p. 57

16. Ricouer, Op. Cit., p. 57

17. The complete poem reads,

> He fumbles at your soul
> As players at the keys
> Before they drop full music on.
> He stuns you by degrees,
> Prepares your brittle nature
> For the ethereal blow
> By fainter hammers heard,
> Then nearer, then so slow
> Your breath has time to straighten,
> Your brain to bubble cool,
> Deals one imperial thunderbolt
> That scalps your naked soul.
>
> When winds take forests in their paws,
> The Universe is still.

18. Janet Martin Soskice, Op. Cit., p. 59

19. Donald Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean" in Sheldon Sacks (ed), On Metaphor, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 1979 p. 39

20. Soskice, Op. Cit., p. 62

21. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Op. Cit.

22. See for example Stephen Ullman and Max Black discussed in Soskice, Op. Cit.

23. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live By, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London. 1980 p. 3

24. Ibid., p. 4

25. David Cooper, "Metaphors We Live By", in A. Phillips Griffiths (ed), Philosophy and Practice, Royal Institute of Philosophy Lecture Series: 18, Supplement to Philosophy (1984) p. 46

26. Ibid.

27. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Op. Cit., p. 5

28. Ibid.

29. Iris Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good, Ark Paperbacks, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London. 1985 p. 34

30. Lakoff and Johnson, Ibid., p. 22

31. Ted Cohen, "Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy", in Sheldon Sacks (ed), On Metaphor, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 1979 pp. 1 - 10, and David E. Cooper, Metaphor, Basil Blackwell Publisher Ltd., Oxford. 1986

32. David E. Cooper, Metaphor, Basil Blackwell Publisher Ltd., Oxford. 1986 pp. 153 - 4

33. Ibid., p. 156

34. Ibid., p. 154

35. Ibid., p. 157

36. Ibid., p. 153

37. Ibid., p. 158

38. Ibid., pp. 158 - 9

39. Ibid., pp. 162 - 3

40. Max Black, "Metaphor", Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, (1954 - 55) pp. 273 - 294

41. Ibid., p. 278

42. John Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding, (Book 3, Chapter 10) quoted in Ted Cohen, Op. Cit., p. 2

43. Black, Op. Cit., p. 280 - 1

44. David Cooper, Metaphor, p. 54ff.

45. Ibid., p. 56

46. Black, Op. Cit., p. 282

47. Cooper, Metaphor, pp. 57 - 58

48. I.A. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1965 p. 93

49. It is important to note what is taking place in this new theory of metaphor. It is Richards who says that "I have glanced for a moment at the deep waters into which a serious study of metaphor will take us ..." (Ibid., p. 91). In these "deep waters" lie undisclosed theories of meaning, of language and of epistemology. Both the substitution and comparison view of metaphor, as well as the interaction theory, contain assumptions about how language functions and what is normative. The substitution and comparison theories seem to imply that the norm for language is direct representation and thus literal statement. Metaphor is in some sense an aberration that needs to be clarified and literalized for it to be credible as a candidate for meaning. The interaction theory is built on a different set of assumptions. It recognizes that metaphor, far from being an ornament or a peculiarity of language may actually be the norm. This is not only based on observations of language use but upon a theory of meaning in language. It would assert that words are signs which rather than holding particular meanings in themselves point to "not one discrete impression, but a combination of general aspects" (Richards, p. 93). Meaning therefore, is constructed by the "meaning maker" with the available thoughts, concepts and categories indicated by words. So Richards writes of metaphor that rather than being a verbal matter, a shifting or displacement of words, "... fundamentally it is a borrowing between and intercourse of thoughts, a transaction between contexts. Thought is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison, and the metaphors of language derive therefrom." (p. 94) It is significant to note the similarities between Richard's view here and that of Lakoff and Johnson. Despite the lack of precision in the use of some of his concepts, Richard's emphasis rests upon thought and context rather than on words and "literal" meaning.

50. Ibid., p. 97

51. Black, Op. Cit., p. 286

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid., pp. 286 - 288

54. Ibid., p. 289

55. Ibid., pp. 284 - 285

56. Soskice, Op. Cit., pp. 46 ff.

57. Cited by Richards, Op. Cit., p. 102

58. Ibid., p. 106

59. Soskice, Op. Cit.,

60. Ibid., p, 47

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid., p. 48

CHAPTER FOUR

A METHOD PROPOSED

Had I the heaven's embroidered cloths
Enwrought with gold and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.
- W.B. Yeats

Our examination of metaphor has revealed it to be a multi-dimensional phenomenon of language linked to the ways we perceive our world and live our lives, related to our moral attitudes and way of life, a factor in the creation of human intimacy and significant to the development of understanding. While it is a subject of debate as to whether all religious language is metaphorical, it is clear that a substantial and essential part of the language of religion is metaphorical and therefore an

understanding of metaphor is central to an understanding of religion. Our discussion in the preceding chapters leads to several proposals for educational practice. It is important to emphasize that what follows is a contribution to religious education practice and not a suggestion for a complete program of religious education. Religious education is a varied activity involving such diverse areas as art and music, worship, philosophical-theological discussion and works of charity. A careful attention to religious metaphor, however, is a necessary aspect of religious education, an understanding of which can help the religious educator avoid the two pitfalls of excessive rationalism or invidious indoctrination. Our consideration of theories of metaphor suggests ways in which metaphor is and can be a vehicle for learning. As proposals are made it is important to recall the discussion in previous chapters. There is a variety of features which characterize religion and the religious person. Despite the plurality of phenomena associated with religion, the personal involvement characterized by devoutness is of critical importance. The features of education highlighted included initiation into the activity of the particular educational concern, promotion of rational appraisal, and the development of understanding within the particular educational focus. These were focussed in the educational praxis of Paulo Freire - the educational model of experience, followed by reflection and analysis, followed by action and further reflection in an ongoing learning cycle. Metaphor and its near relation, symbol, provide the foundation for that initiation into religious life from which a rational appraisal can take place.

This chapter begins in the recognition that theory plays a critical role in shaping

practise, but that there also exists a degree of imprecision and room for the "not yet known" in the implications that may be drawn from any theoretical exploration. The remarks which follow then are suggestions, forays into the area of practice which need to be put to the test of experience and empirical study.

I

THE METHOD PROPOSED

It is useful to distinguish between the use of metaphor as an aid to learning and teaching about metaphors. Some educators (usually teachers of reading and language) are concerned with how a teacher helps a student to identify, use and interpret metaphors. This has included the giving of a simple definition of metaphor such as "a metaphor involves direct comparisons while similes are indirect comparisons using 'like' or 'as'."[1] A review of the comparison theories of metaphor quickly reveal the problems with this kind of definition. There have also been attempts to develop ways to assist students to interpret metaphorical statements when they are encountered.[2] Again, an examination of the theories of metaphor reveals how it is possible that some simple metaphors of the x is y variety may be interpreted, but many more metaphors will not be able to be interpreted in this way. Still other metaphors will be irreducible to literal statements as in the example from Virginia Woolf's To The Lighthouse in Chapter Three. Although teachers of language may need to assist readers to identify metaphors, the attempt to provide a simple formula for their interpretation may be naive. As

Lakoff and Johnson have argued, metaphors are found throughout language. As such, they may not be the exception needing to be interpreted, but phenomena with which all language users are already familiar. A study of children and metaphor has revealed that even very young children have some understanding of metaphor and are able to discuss it.[3] Children in grades one, two, three, and four were able to respond with comprehension to a variety of metaphors when asked "What does this mean to you?". This suggests, perhaps, that instead of teaching about metaphors directly by attempting to offer facile definitions or formulae for interpretation, educators can provide opportunities for students to read a great variety of metaphors as they appear in literature, poetry, riddles and jokes and to encourage them to express their understanding of what they mean. In such an approach we can distinguish between metaphor as a learning aid (in this case an aid to the enjoyment of language and meaning-making) and teaching about metaphor itself. The following is not a suggestion for teaching about metaphor, but arises from the view that metaphor itself is an aid for learning.

The proposed method rests on affirmative answers to the question: Can an individual's perspective and experience be shaped by exposure to metaphors? and the related question: Will a religious perspective be experienced by a student's personal engagement with religious metaphors? It has already been argued in previous chapters that there is a strong relationship between metaphor and an individual's experience of and way of living in the world. Craig Dykstra in his book entitled Vision and Character: A Christian Educator's Alternative to Kohlberg argues that images do shape

our experience and our perception.[4] In respect to moral understanding, Iris Murdoch recommends that a careful attention paid to others will indeed develop new perspectives.[5] By "attention" Murdoch means "a just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality."[6] Despite the ambiguity of exactly what she means by this, she elsewhere indicates that this is akin to prayer. "Prayer is properly not petition, but simply an attention to God which is a form of love."[7] Dykstra, acknowledging his debt to Simone Weil and Brother Lawrence takes a similar position: "If this idea that prayer consists of attention to God seems strange to us, perhaps it is because we have given up the discipline and no longer really know how to pray. In most of our praying, our attention is neither focussed nor on God."[8] Writers on prayer in the Christian tradition broadly distinguish between two types of prayer. One is prayer which is contemplation of images, metaphors and events and the other is an emptying or a meditating without images.[9] What I am suggesting is that there is an important role in religious education for the traditional religious discipline of prayer as meditation. This can be a highly contentious proposal. What is important to remember, is that prayer as meditation in the sense that I am using the word does not imply any particular doctrinal commitment or religious affiliation. Meditation as attention is to be understood as the activity of consciously choosing to open oneself to the meaning and affect of specific images or metaphors from the great reservoir of religious literature. This experience can then become the material for rational reflection. In other words, prayer as meditation on or attention to religious metaphors can be a learning aid by which students become aware of the way metaphors provide a variety of insights. The

classic literature of religious tradition provides a rich source of metaphor for such meditative experiences. To be initiated into religious understanding and activity is in part to meditate upon the religious metaphors which have arisen in religious literature and which can shape an individual's religious experience.

In Paulo Freire's philosophy of education, rational reflection is undertaken in a "dialogic" relationship between individuals, upon their experience.[10] For Freire the object of this action-reflection model is to enable individuals to become aware of their own life settings - the people, the geography, the power and the systems which impinge upon a person. This consciousness-raising is a socio-political consciousness-raising which provides the organizing themes for literacy education. Freire's "praxis" model of education is useful in other settings for it provides a model for rational reflection upon experience (as opposed to rational reflection upon concepts or events which are not obviously related in the learning to the personal experiences of the students). In our consideration of metaphor and religious education, it is my suggestion above that religious metaphors play a significant role in the cultivation of religious experience and understanding. Thus the activity of attending to, or meditating upon religious metaphors provides the important personal experiences upon which to base any reflection. This is not to say that there is no place for philosophical theology or other intellectual disciplines in religious study, only that for education to be religious education there must be significant features of religion experience to reflect personally upon.

The dynamics of such meditation understood as attention to particular images involves a two stage process.[11] The first is one in which the metaphor is focussed

upon. This involves a discipline of turning one's attention to the particular image, resisting the influences of our preconceptions and our own desires of how things should be and allowing that image to make an impact upon one's thoughts and feelings. This is an activity of the imagination as the attendant image is related to other images in the meditator's experience. The metaphor may challenge existing metaphors, reinforce others, suggest still other previously disconnected images. Thus a careful attention to and meditation upon the metaphor "The Lord is my Shepherd" may provide new perspectives and even new experiences for one whose perspective is characterized by such metaphors as "It's a dog-eat-dog world". This first stage is a period of attention, and imaginative free association and requires adequate time and space for such an association of images to take place. The second stage is a stage of enquiry, analysis, and interpretation. What has been experienced or discovered in the meditative phase is now expressed, connected with other experiences or other things one knows, communicated in various ways to others and tested publicly.[12] For this experience to be educational this second stage reflective process of critical appraisal is essential. It does not necessarily, however, involve rejection of prior commitments or the adoption of particular new beliefs. As Paul Hirst argues,

> Commitment and holding to the revisability of that commitment are in no sense incompatible. True, critical assessment of a belief demands entertaining the idea of rejecting that belief, but the 'suspension of belief' for the purposes of critical assessment is not of itself to withdraw commitment or to enter a state of doubt for any purpose other than that of critical review.[13]

II

THE METHOD APPLIED

The first proposal draws specifically upon the work of Lakoff and Johnson and the discussion about faith as distinguished from belief and knowledge. As Lakoff and Johnson have argued, metaphors reflect the ways in which people organize their experiences and may also shape perception itself. Thus in the "argument is war" metaphor, arguments are not only referred to in metaphors of war such as "I demolished my opponent's position" and "She took a different strategy to defend her position", but people actually experience losing or winning an argument. This suggests that a careful attention to the types of metaphor employed by a student will provide clues to how that person experiences and lives in the world. The example cited above of the metaphors "The Lord is my Shepherd" and "It's a dog-eat-dog world" provided two quite different perspectives. In a religious education setting both metaphors might be offered in explicit contrast for attention or meditation. Other metaphors from the Christian religious tradition might be "You are the light of the world", Jesus' words "I am the Vine, you are the branches.", or "Our Father who art in heaven". After a time in which students quietly meditate upon such metaphors (the first stage of the process), the metaphors are then analysed and interpreted (the second stage). The "teaching strategy" is to avoid explaining the usual view of the experience associated with a particular metaphor and to encourage individuals to consider their own understanding

of it. For the individual who has expressed part of her perspective as "God is my Father", reflection can take place by an exploration of the network of associated ideas, for example: God is my Father may suggest M_1: all people are one family, M_2: the earth is our home, M_3: I am cared for, M_4: God and I have a special relationship, etc. Different individuals will likely identify different ideas from their personal networks of association as being more or less significant. Some of these may be metaphorical, others literal. Thus a woman abused by her father in childhood will have a radically different network of association for this metaphor than one who had a happy relationship. In addition to an exploration of the network of ideas associated with a particular metaphor, it is also valuable to ask "What is missing in this perspective from my experience of the world?" To consider the metaphor "God is my Father" further, this may exclude images of God as Light, God as Transcendent, humanity as stewards of creation, or other images of people as opponents and obstacles. This is also a valuable educational exercise for those who would not identify themselves as "religious" as a way of developing an understanding of their own perspectives.

The second proposal is very closely allied to the first but the focus is shifted from metaphors which relate to an individual's particular way of life, to the moral perspective of students, thus taking seriously the role of metaphors as an aid for moral education. Again, as Lakoff and Johnson suggested, the metaphors which point to particular "conceptual models" reflect a moral component as well. Thus, how one describes the world is an indication of the moral stance which may be taken. The metaphor "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it" suggests a different moral

perspective than "Man is master of the Universe". Exposure to and reflection upon religious metaphors may thus contribute to an individual's particular moral perspective. Dykstra argues this in what he calls a "visional ethic", that is, an ethic not based so much on abstract principles, but on particular ways of perceiving. The above approach of examining a network of associated ideas provides insight into the values implied by certain metaphors. So too, the question, "what is missing in this perspective?" helps students reflect on their own value systems. So for example, the metaphor "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit", suggests a network of values which, if the metaphor is taken at all seriously, becomes a significant moral viewpoint. The network may include V_1: My body is to be cared for with proper nutrition, exercise and rest, V_2: My body is good, V_3: My body is holy, etc. The question "What is missing in this perspective?" may reveal that the metaphor "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit" emphasizes values which support personal gratification, but ignore the social nature of the world suggested in such metaphors as "You are members one of another", and "The Global Village". Attention to metaphors, then, in the form of meditation and analysis can also be a learning aid in the formation of and reflection upon moral values.

Thirdly, metaphors can play a role in the formation of communities of religious persons. As both Ted Cohen and David Cooper have suggested, metaphors function and promote a feeling of intimacy between users. To employ and understand particular metaphors requires a shared context and a common heritage. Some metaphors can be widely appreciated such as "The road was a ribbon of darkness", while others such as (to cite Cooper's example), "I married a regular ticket to the opera", require more

familiarity. The sharing of a common reservoir of religious metaphor may promote a sense of intimacy between those who have developed a familiarity with them. The formation of such a group of "shared metaphor users" can become the basis for groups that participate in a critical reflection upon the metaphors used. As indicated in Chapter Three, however, there is a danger in which groups that do not engage in such critical reflection do not develop an awareness of some of the limitations of the metaphors which influence them. The stage of reflection is essential to the process as teachers assist learners to analyse and interpret their experience of the type and quality of communities which share particular metaphors. The examples in Chapter Three were metaphors of the "motherland" or "fatherland" which emphasize a particular patriotic relationship but ignore or at least do not emphasize other social relationships. This is also true for religious communities which share particular metaphors. A contemporary example is the Christian communities for which the metaphor "born-again Christian" is important. Clearly there are some who will be included in the group and others who will not based on this metaphor.[14] The dominance of this metaphor overshadows other metaphors such as "children of God" or "family of humanity".

The final area for consideration and perhaps the most complex relates to the epistemological status of metaphors. This can be the source of a great deal of fruitful reflection as individuals respond to the question "What does this mean to you ...?". This aspect of applying the method approaches the tradition of philosophical theology and requires a facility with abstract reasoning. It may be less useful for young children who have not yet adequately developed the capacity for explicit abstract thought, although

there are some indications that even young children can respond to this question with comprehension.[15] It will become more and more appropriate and indeed necessary for older children and adults who are capable of explicit abstract thinking. This proposal takes seriously the questions which arise regarding the nature of metaphorical language, such as "What does it mean when a metaphor cannot be expressed in literal language?" and "In what way do religious metaphors refer?". While acknowledging that there is a variety of examples of metaphor it is important to note that some metaphors such as "The Church is the New Israel" will be reducible to literal statements (with enough familiarity with religious tradition), others will be chiefly ornamental, others will not be reducible to literal statements and instead be suggestive of new insights. To entertain these questions the teacher must be familiar with the traditions of philosophy which address these questions and assist students in exploring some of the theories of metaphor and some of the traditions of philosophical theology. How this approach differs from most rational approaches to religion such as that proposed by Paul Hirst, is that the students will have had some experiences from "inside" religion and will have experienced such aspects as indicated above which provide the background to any of the more philosophical discussions of religion.

To summarize, I am suggesting that an informed attention to metaphor will provide a foundation for an approach to religious education which takes seriously the nature of religion and the demands of becoming educated. This approach involves:

1. Personal openess to religious metaphors through a process of attention or meditation. It is important to account for the diversity of individuals by offering a wide

variety of metaphors from religious literature and encouraging individuals to consider metaphors which are of interest to them. A meditative attention to such metaphors will influence individual experiences of the world, morality, community and religious claims.

2. A process of reflection upon each of these aspects of religion. Through dialogue (between students, teacher and students, and students and their own experience) students are assisted to consider rationally their experiences in a praxis model of education. Such reflection may lead to further meditation upon particular metaphors religious or not) and further reflection in an ongoing process of learning which can be beneficially transformative. An inherent value of this approach is the development of an awareness of the presence, power, and dynamics of all types of metaphor in discourse while avoiding indoctrination into a particular point of view.

III

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

In the role of religious educator, the teacher occupies a particularly sensitive position. Due to the many aspects of life touched by religion, the teacher is given a sacred trust by students for the method proposed above involves the exploration not only of impersonal claims or theories, but ideas and attitudes which are the foundation of personality and character. It is essential that the teacher have great respect for the students who explore the metaphors that give shape to their lives because, to take

Yeats' metaphor, the teacher treads on their dreams. The fundamental role of the teacher in the proposed method is, to chose a metaphor, that of a guide for enquiry. The teacher guides the enquiry process, which is a process of reflection and dialogue - reflection by the student upon the metaphors he or she encounters, dialogue between students as they discuss their experiences, and dialogue between student and teacher as they engage in that process of reflection upon experience.

For the teacher to be a guide in this process, there must exist a trust between the student and the teacher - a trust that the teacher is not attempting to manipulate or coerce students to a particular viewpoint, and a trust that the teacher also speaks from experience. As Martin Buber writes of the teacher,

> ... there is only <u>one</u> access to the pupil: his confidence... When the pupil's confidence has been won, his resistance against being educated gives way to a singular happening: he accepts the educator as a person. He feels he may trust this man, that this man is not making a business out of him, but is taking part in his life, accepting him before desiring to influence him. And so he learns to <u>ask</u>.[16]

The teacher, then, is not one who stands apart from the student to select from the great vaults of human knowledge gems which the student must safely store. The teacher is a companion who will explore aspects of experience with the student. It is important for the teacher to appreciate the potential for the abuse of such a role. Any coercion, or suggestion that particular metaphors must be exclusively employed is a denial of the individual's autonomy and of education as defined. The teacher's skills will be used in suggesting metaphors representative of a tradition, inviting alternatives from the students as they become aware of the available metaphors and assisting the

students to analyse and interpret their own experiences.

It is important that the teacher not only understand the process, but be one who has practised and understood the activity of attending to metaphors and images in meditation. The first stage of the process involves the practise of meditation, of attending to particular metaphors and the teacher must be able to encourage an environment which supports meditation, provide advice to students as they seek to learn significant attention, and offer the time, assist in strategies, and provide materials required for meditation to take place.

In addition to familiarity with the first stage of the approach, the teacher must also develop skills in interpretation and dialogue. The focus in this second stage is upon the students as they analyse and interpret their own experience. It is not for the teacher to offer an authoritarian explanation, for metaphors will evoke different responsed from different people. The one area where teachers may provide explanations or clarifications is in that part of the discussion which concerns the nature and function of metaphors themselves. In other areas of analyses, the teacher will encourage students to offer their own insights and reflections.

It is also inappropriate for the teacher to require any kind of commitment to any particular metaphorical system from students. Students may indeed maintain personal commitments, choose to revise those commitments, or suspend belief, but what is essential is for the teacher to encourage the experience and assist in the appraisal of the experience. In this process of experience and reflection, the emphasis is on students understanding the process and the implications of employing particular metaphors. The

exposure to metaphors may lead to conflicts within individual students. For example the student who has a strong attachment to the metaphor "God is my Father" to encounter female imagery of God can be confusing, and unsettling. Rather than encourage an early resolution to such a conflict the teacher must allow the student time to consider the implications of the metaphors and to experience them over some time. Premature resolution may interfere with the imaginative process of stage one.[17]

As the students reflect on their experiences, whether it be with new insights, questions, inner conflicts, or indifference, the role of the teacher is to listen - to hear the experiences of the students and to encourage the process to continue in the ongoing cycle of experience, followed by reflection, followed by further experience and reflection.

Although I have concentrated on Christian religious education, such experience in reflection upon metaphors may well be transferable across other religious frameworks and ways of life. Metaphors, in Hinduism and Islam, might well be considered by students and thus contribute to the development of a broader understanding of religious traditions, and as a source of contrasting images, lead to a deeper understanding as well.

What is being proposed in these suggestions is an approach to religious education that takes account of the more serious meanings of both the religious and the educational. An understanding of metaphor and its significant place in religious language has much to offer such an approach which seeks a middle way between the Scylla of disconnected reason and the Charybdis of unconsidered experience. This

means developing educational opportunites which introduce students to the breadth of religious phenomena, not merely as spectators or voyeurs, but as participants, as well as assisting students to develop a reasoned critique of their experience. To embark on the former (encouraging students to develop a first-hand experience of some of the features of religion) without the latter (a rational analysis of their experience) is to encourage a program of indoctrination. To develop the latter without the former, is to promote an arid intellectualism which avoids the important context out of which the credal assertions of faith arise. An understanding of the far reaching effects of metaphor in human experience points us clearly to the major contribution such an awareness can bring to religious education. Without such an awareness any religious education will be severely limited.

ENDNOTES

1. Stephen J. Thompson, "Teaching metaphoric language: an instructional strategy", Journal of Reading, Vol. 30: No. 2, November 1986 p. 105

2. Ibid., pp. 105 - 109

3. Francis E. Kazemek and Pat Rigg, "The Sun is a Wounded Deer: Children and Metaphor", Educational Horizons, Vol. 66: No. 1, Fall 1987 pp. 30 - 34

4. Craig Dykstra, Vision and Character: A Christian Educator's Alternative to Kohlberg, Paulist Press, New York. 1981 See especially pp. 75 - 88

5. Iris Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good, Ark Paperbacks, London. 1985 pp. 32 ff.

6. Ibid., p. 34

7. Ibid., p. 55

8. Dykstra, Op. Cit., p. 95

9. See for example: Morton T. Kelsey, The Other Side of Silence: A Guide to Christian Meditation, Paulist Press, New York. 1976, Kenneth Leech, True Prayer: An Introduction to Christian Spirituality, The Anglican Book Centre, Toronto. 1980 and Evelyn Underhill, Worship, Harper and Brothers Publisher, New York. 1937

10. Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, The Seabury Press, New York. 1970 pp. 75 ff.

11. Dykstra, Op. Cit.

12. Ibid., p. 81

13. Paul Hirst, "Religious Education and Diversity of Belief" in M.C. Felderhof (ed.), Op. Cit., p. 13

14. Alan Peshkin quotes the headmaster of a fundamentalist Christian school as telling his students, "Turn to John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life [he emphasizes] no one cometh unto the Father but by me." If you have the truth, you need to do something about it.

That billboard advertisement you see, "Attend the church of your choice," is the philosophy of the National Council of Churches and it's wicked, satanic, and wrong because of John 14:6. You are custodians of the truth. We are the way. Mormons don't have it.", Op. Cit., p. 133

15. Francis E. Kazemek and Pat Rigg, Op. Cit.

16. Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, Fount Paperbacks, Collins, Glasgow. 1979 p. 135

17. Craig Dykstra, Op. Cit., p. 133

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